

A HISTORY  
OF THE  
YOUNG MEN'S  
CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.



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History of the Young Men's  
Christian Association ..











Yours very truly  
George Williams

HISTORY  
OF THE  
YOUNG MEN'S  
CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION.

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VOLUME I.  
THE FOUNDING OF THE ASSOCIATION,  
1844-1855.

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## PREFATORY NOTE.

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This volume is a thesis presented in the Department of Sociology of the University of Leipsic, under the direction of Prof. von Miaskowski. The purpose for which it was prepared explains its scope without further comment.

The writer's interest in the history of the Association grew out of the preparation of a paper on the history of the American Movement, read before the "Ohio Church History Society," in 1892.

Direct work upon this history was begun in August, 1893. In gathering material, several months were spent at the headquarters of the American Committee at New York, in the library of the American International Committee at Springfield, Mass., and at Exeter Hall in London. Visits have been made to the conference of the German Associations, held at Eisenach, in October, 1893; the World's Convention of Associations of all lands, at London, in June, 1894; to the headquarters of the German National Committee at Elberfeld, the World's Committee at Geneva, and the local Associations at a variety of places, especially Berlin and Paris. From the libraries at Springfield, New York, London and Berlin, I have been kindly loaned reports and records, many of which are rare, and without which it would have been impossible to have gathered the numerous historical data.

Personal interviews have been held with many of the actors in the Association's history; especially am I indebted to the noble Christian man whom all who know

this movement love and revere: Sir George Williams, the Father of the Young Men's Christian Association. The friends who have assisted me are so many, a complete list cannot be given. I am especially under obligation to W. Hind Smith and W. H. Mills of London, to Christian Phildius of Berlin and H. Helbing of Elberfeld, to S. D. Gordon, R. R. McBurney and Richard C. Morse, and Jacob T. Bowne of the International Training School.

This theme has grown into a work much beyond my expectation. I hope at some future day, if this volume meets with a kindly reception, to add two others on the second and third periods of the Association's history.

L. L. D.

FEBRUARY, 1896.

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THE  
FOUNDING OF THE ASSOCIATION.



# THE FOUNDING OF THE ASSOCIATION.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

#### SECTION I.—THE STUDY OF SOCIOLOGY.<sup>1</sup>

The thought of the ancient world was absorbed in the relation of man to nature and the universe. The Greek philosophers sought for an explanation of the physical world, and the principles underlying existence. They developed the study of Cosmology.

The Middle Ages, through the introduction of Christianity, became absorbed in the study of the relation of man to God. The teaching of Jesus Christ that God is "Our Father" and "thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind," riveted the attention of men and developed the study of Theology; men had advanced from a study of the universe to the study of God.

The Reformation and the Renaissance shifted the point of view: men have not ceased to study nature or God; they have perhaps eclipsed their fathers, but more and more the modern world is devoting itself to the study of the relation of man to man; the study of society or Sociology—man in organized relationships.

<sup>1</sup> Erdman's History of Philosophy; Hough's English translation; MacMillan & Co., N. Y., 3rd Edition, 1892. Sec. 259 "outline" in 3rd Vol. by Prof. H. C. King; Richard Ely's "Social Aspects of Christianity." Chap. I.

The saying of Jesus Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is being placed beside his teaching of love to God.

## SEC. 2.—RELIGION AS A SOCIAL FORCE.<sup>2</sup>

The two fundamental principles on which human society, not the ideal society, but present society is organized, are self-interest and altruism. Spencer, Drummond and Kidd, however much they disagree in the application of these two principles, practically recognize them. "Egoism" and "Altruism," the "struggle for life," and "the struggle for the life of others," are different names for the same thing. Drummond makes these two principles evolve side by side. Kidd makes society the resultant of a continued warfare between them. He holds that reason dictates the pursuit of one's own interests, and religion through the conscience dictates that men should have regard for the interests of others. He thus recognizes religion as a social force. Spencer tries to ignore it. Professor Marshall, practically in the same way with Benjamin Kidd, places religion in contrast with self-interest when he says, "The two great forming agencies of the world's history have been the religious and the economic."

It is not the purpose of this treatise to discuss the manner in which religion has usually been treated as a social force, but to present an example of the way in which the Christian religion operates as a factor in society. Men are born with both the egoistic and the altruistic instinct. The Christian religion does not create either. It is natural for parents to love their children, and friends their friends. It is also natural for men to seek their own interests. Society may at present, as

<sup>2</sup> "Social Evolution," Benjamin Kidd, MacMillan & Co., N. Y., 1894. "Ascent of Man," Henry Drummond; Hodder, London, 1894. "Principles of Economics," Vol. I., p. 1., Prof. Marshall.



Benjamin Kidd holds, be the result of a struggle between these two forces, but the Christian religion is gradually harmonizing the two, by a proper recognition of both. It seeks to control both forces and establish a proper equilibrium between the two on the principle laid down by Jesus Christ, "Thou shalt *love* thy neighbor as thyself." Egoism is regard only for self; altruism is regard only for others; *love* is a proper regard for both one's own interest and the interests of others.

Christianity is the greatest of social forces because it is the religion of equal love between man and man.

### SEC. 3.—INFLUENCE OF THE RELIGION OF LOVE ON CHARACTER.

Benjamin Kidd points out that the superiority of one race over another consists not in intellect, but in the possession of the moral qualities of virtue, steadfastness, integrity and self-mastery. He shows successfully that these qualities, and not intellectual gifts, have determined the survival and supremacy of nations and races. Paul teaches that love (Galatians 5: 22) is the foundation stone on which these moral qualities rest. Love makes men honest towards their fellows; love is the source of self-sacrifice; the mainspring of true virtue; the inspiration of valor; the highest incentive to achievement, and to what Paul and Spencer<sup>3</sup> alike place as the cap-stone of virtue, self-mastery or self-control.

I do not wish here to discuss the relation of man to God or to the future life, but to insist that when a man becomes a follower of Jesus Christ and endeavors to love his fellow men as himself, he becomes a new factor in society. His relation to the family, the State, the economic world, and all human life are governed no longer by the principles of self-interest or altruism, but

<sup>3</sup> "Principles of Sociology," Herbert Spencer; Third Edition, Appleton & Co., N. Y., 1891, Vol. I., Chap. VI.

a new principle has harmonized both—equal love to himself and his fellow men.

The religion of love works at the foundation of society because it forms character in individuals. It is a primal social force. Henri Amiel has recognized its relation to society when he says: "Society rests upon conscience; not upon science; civilization is first and foremost a moral thing; without honesty, without respect for law, without the worship of duty, without the love of one's neighbor, in a word, without virtue, the whole is menaced and falls into decay. The ultimate ground upon which every civilization rests is the average morality of the masses, and a sufficient amount of practical righteousness."<sup>4</sup>

The principle of love which harmonizes the egoistic and altruistic forces in man, and thus builds character, the foundation of society, has taken of necessity the next step and seeks to guide men's actions. The religion of love not only shapes the actions of those who have accepted it, but it is constantly creating a public sentiment, a tradition of conduct, so to speak, which guides the movements of society.

The ideal society which fulfills its functions on the principle of love between man and man may seem unattainable, but it is this power of love which has abolished slavery, mitigated war, and which for centuries has been diminishing class and hereditary privileges. It is the practical side of the religion of Christ, and it is working today with unabated power. The religion of love is a fundamental social force, because it *moulds men's character and governs their conduct.*

#### SEC. 4.—RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS.

Like all great sociological forces, religion founds in-

<sup>4</sup> Amiel's "Journal," Mrs. Humphrey Ward's English translation, London, 1893, Vol. II., p. 86.

stitutions to fulfill its mission. The political, economic, educational and social forces of society have established powerful agencies which act with far-reaching consequences. The institution established by its founder to fulfill the mission of the Christian religion is the Christian Church. In connection with what is popularly comprehended under this term, the religion of Jesus Christ has built up a vast net-work of agencies, differently managed at various periods of Christian history, but adapted as completely as the resources at hand and the circumstances of the times would permit, to fulfill the great mission before it.

A multitude of organizations, institutions and establishments, under the centralized authority of the Pope, such as cloisters, schools of learning, monastic orders and alms houses, were established by the Church of Rome in the middle ages, as a direct expression of the religion of love.

Mr. Ingram, in his history of Economic Science, speaks thus: "Catholic Christianity brought out more forcibly and presented more persistently the higher aims of life, and so produced a more elevated way of viewing social relations. It purified domestic life, a reform which has the most important economic results. It taught the doctrine of fundamental human equality; heightened the dignity of labor, and preached with quite a new emphasis the obligation of love, compassion and forgiveness, and the claims of the poor. To the influence of Christianity as a moral doctrine was added that of the church, as an organization, charged with the application of that doctrine to men's daily transactions."

As the various sociological forces extend their influence, the organizations of society increase in intricacy and complexity. The progress of religion illustrates this law. The organizations of the early church were

simple, compared with the ramified agencies of modern Protestantism. The more vital and vigorous spiritual forces are, the more completely they lay hold of the classes of society, and the different departments of life.

The Christian religion is a primal social force, because it begets love between man and man, and thus moulds human character and directs human conduct. In order to accomplish this practical side of its mission it founds such institutions as the changing circumstances of the race demand.

#### SEC. 5.—THEME AND METHOD.

The object of this thesis is to show the operation of this social force in one of the most important spheres of life—young manhood. One of the remarkable institutions established by the Christian Church is the Young Men's Christian Association. It is desired to show, first, the way in which the spirit of Christian love has created this institution, and second, to measure as truly as possible its influence and significance. In discussing its development, I have tried to bear in mind that it is an expression of a spiritual and religious force, and have sought to give a true picture of the motives, aspirations and forces which have guided it. They are distinctively religious.

Doctrine, polity and the relation to the organized church are discussed only so far as these affect the constitution of the organization and the character and conduct of its members.

In order to measure the influence of the Young Men's Christian Association, we must understand first, the nature of the religious forces which produced it, and second, the social environment which has made such a movement necessary. We must study the cause and the occasion.

*Geographically*, the Association has developed three



types of life, each type in the main being determined by the conditions which surround it. These three types of Association life are the Anglo-American, the Continental (European), and the Missionary. The Association is an International Evangelical Institution, and reflects the condition of Protestantism in the different sections of the world. As contrasted with Romanism, a fundamental characteristic of the Protestant Church is freedom. It rests on individual consent; it aims at the development of the individual, and seeks to influence society and the state mainly through the individual. While freedom is its general characteristic, the conditions of Protestantism on the continent of Europe are so different from those which prevail in English-speaking countries, and further, the conditions in heathen lands are so diverse from those in lands that are denominated Christian, that it is necessary to treat separately the three types of Association life.

*Chronologically*, Association history is divided into three periods:

- (1) Introduction of the Association idea. 1844-1855.
- (2) The development of Association methods. 1855-1883.
- (3) Wide extension of the movement. 1883-1896.

The chronological method has been chosen as the basis of treatment, combining with it the topical and the geographical, but the movements in different countries will be presented only so far as may be necessary to get a true perspective. This thesis is limited to the first period 1844 to 1855.

## CHAPTER II.

### BEGINNINGS OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

#### SEC. 6.—PREPARATION IN THE BRITISH CHURCHES.

The distinguishing characteristic of Protestantism in each of the great sections of the Protestant world, Continental Europe, Great Britain and America, grows out of the relation of the Church to the State. Continental Protestantism is marked by the union, almost the subjection, of the Church to the government. In Germany, dissenters number half a million—a mere handful of the population. In Great Britain, the people are almost equally divided upon this question, whilst America affords the example of a free church.

We consider first the nation where conviction on this question is in one form or another the prominent factor in determining church relationship—England, the soul of Protestantism, the home of the Anglican Church, of Puritanism and of Wesleyanism.

The religious forces at work in England at the beginning of the century may be traced directly to the Reformation, as represented by the Established Church; to the Puritan or Dissenting movement, as represented, by the Independents, Presbyterians and Baptists, bodies which have been most active in advocating the separation of the church from the State; and to the Wesleyan Revival of the 18th century, as represented by the Methodists. Christians were generally designated with reference to their attitude toward the Established Church, as either churchmen or non-conformists. Churchmen gradually became divided into three parties

—"High Church," "Low Church" or "Evangelical," and "Broad Church" or "Liberals."

The "Evangelicals" were largely descendants of the Puritan and Wesleyan Revivals, who remained within the Established Church. The "Evangelicals" and the "Non-Conformists," while differing widely on questions affecting the relation of the Church to the State, were gradually approaching a platform on which they could act together with regard to great matters of social and moral reform. Romanism need not be considered in this discussion, as Roman Catholics number but four per cent. of the population in Great Britain.

At the beginning of the century, religion was at a sadly low ebb all over the Protestant world. Religious life in England was feeble. War, infidelity, the Industrial Revolution, and other causes had rendered large multitudes indifferent to spiritual things.

Bishop Burgess wrote of the Welsh See of St. David (1803): "The churches and ecclesiastical buildings are in a ruinous condition. Many of the clergy are incompetently educated and disgrace their profession by inebriety and other degrading vices."

"Clergymen often occupied several livings and neglected them all. Bishops, as a rule, were not in position to be overstrict, as some of their own body were the most glaring offenders."<sup>5</sup>

"At the beginning of the century the number of churches built and rebuilt (Church of England) averaged only three in a year."<sup>6</sup> In 1814, John Bowdler wrote: "Not a tenth part of the Church of England population in the west and east parts of the metropolis, and the populous parts of Middlesex, can be accommodated in our churches and chapels. Over 950,000 per-

<sup>5</sup> Overton's "History of the Church of England in 19th Century," page 7.

<sup>6</sup> Cutts' "Turning Points of Church History," page 316.

sions in London are left without the possibility of parochial worship. The want of church accommodation is more noticeable in other parts of the kingdom." In 1824, Islington had 30,000 inhabitants, and only one church and one chapel. Evidence exists of almost equal lethargy on the part of the various non-conformist bodies.

The battle of Waterloo closed a series of struggles which for years had absorbed the life and energy of England. With the year 1815, attention began to be directed with renewed vigor to home policy in politics, business and religion. The whole Protestant world was emerging from under the shadow of the great Napoleonic conflicts.

The two religious parties which did most at this period to vitally influence the life of England were the "Evangelicals" in the Established Church and the Non-Conformists. The "Evangelicals" emphasized belief in essentials, piety, practical charity and Christian work. They minimized ceremonies and the doctrine of the church. Overton says: "They were the salt of the earth in their day. It may be said generally that during the first quarter of the century there was a marked increase in the strength of the Evangelical party until it became beyond all question the dominant spiritual power in the Church of England." John Tulloch says: "Evangelicalism was in short the only type of aggressive religion then (1820-30) or for some time prevailing, although its aggressiveness was more of a practical than an intellectual kind." Such leaders as Charles Simeon of Cambridge, William Wilberforce, the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, and the brilliant Hannah More were its chiefs. "They founded the Church Missionary Society, the great British and Foreign Bible Society, and the India Episcopate. They were especially strong in the cities."

Through the influence of these two great parties, the Evangelicals and the Dissenters, an immense activity in Christian effort began in England. Slavery was abolished in 1833, countless agencies, such as ragged schools, tract societies, city missions, mechanics' institutes, Sunday Schools and foreign mission societies were either organized or so enlarged in their activities as to become efficient. From this period dates the beginning of most of the great religious societies, also the great religious periodicals and journals, and the introduction of cheap Christian literature. In 1818, Parliament voted one million pounds for church erection ; in 1830, there was an average of forty churches a year erected by the Church of England alone. In 1827, William Wilberforce expressed himself as "highly gratified with the opening prospect," and he says, "I, who knew the aspect of things forty years ago, can add, with the highly improved state of the clergy."

The Evangelicals have always been on the side of popular reform, and have devoted their energies to uplifting all classes of society. Bishop Hurst, writing in 1865, says of this party: "It has sought out the population of the factories and mines of England and addressed itself to the relief of their cramped and stifled inmates. It has reorganized ragged schools and endeavored to reach all the suffering classes of the Kingdom. At the commencement of its public career it founded the Church Missionary Society (1800) and the Bible Society, which has translated the Scriptures into one hundred and fifty languages, and distributes two million copies annually. Archbishop Sumner founded the first Diocesan Church Building Society in 1828. The Pastoral Aid Society, founded in 1836, by its lay and clerical employees, is now (1865) ministering to three million souls. The Low Churchmen have established in needy localities, Sunday Schools, Infant Schools, Libraries, Benefit

Societies, Clothing Clubs and Circles of Scripture Readers. They seek out the abandoned and hopeless wretches in the darkest sinks of London, reading the Bible to them, clothing, finding work, and training them to self-respect."<sup>7</sup> In the blaze of this devotion, the "fox-hunting parson" and "the absentee rector" of the 18th century became an impossibility.

Religion had, to some extent, shifted its point of view and ceased to be so much a matter of doctrine or churchmanship, as a matter of practical life and helpfulness between man and man. The new movement did not pause to demonstrate its position by syllogisms or formulas, but it made a new ideal to shine before the eyes of men, in the light of which minor differences were forgotten.

In an address before the Evangelical Alliance, 1855, Rev. T. R. Birks said: "Pious Christians have had their intellectual horizons enlarged, and have fixed their thoughts more strongly on the humanizing and social aspect of Christianity." This subsidence of doctrinal discussion and absorption in practical work is of great moment to our subject. Creeds divide, service unites. It indicates two aspirations of the early part of the century, which reveal the beating heart of Christian love, and which were an essential preparation for the Young Men's Christian Association.

First, a growing interest in practical Christian work, and second, the willingness of denominations and parties to co-operate in service. A third advance must also be noticed: Christians were forming the habit of organizing in order to carry out common enterprises.

In the midst of this period, and in spite of the growing spirit of unity, a violent agitation against the Established Church broke out, which so aroused the friends of the church as to produce what is known as

<sup>7</sup> "Hurst's History of Rationalism," page 509.



the Oxford or Anglo-Catholic Movement, called by its friends, the Church Revival. It was really of political origin. The advocates of the Reform Bill, passed in 1832, were pronounced opponents of establishment. "The Reform Bill gave great power to just that class which was most hostile to the Established Church, and most favorable to dissent, not the higher or the lower, but the middle classes."<sup>8</sup>

Dr. Stoughton says: "I question whether in the present day any attacks on any institution are to be compared in bitterness with those in reference to the Established Church between 1820 and 1830."<sup>9</sup> The High Church Party, under the leadership of Newman and Pusey, in 1833, sprang to the rescue, and inaugurated a revival of high churchmanship, which, while it resulted in a revolt to the Church of Rome of some one hundred clergymen and many laymen, restored the piety of the Established Church and its hold upon a large section of the English people. The Tractarians, as the High Churchmen were called, emphasized the ritual and the sacraments. They taught that the episcopacy was of divine appointment, and dissent was separation from the body of Christ. The High Church movement was not in sympathy with such an enterprise as the Young Men's Christian Association. This should be borne in mind, as it is one of the reasons why the Association Movement in England has not received such unanimous encouragement or achieved as abundant success as in America.

The numerical strength of religious parties in England at the time of the founding of the Association may be seen from the census of 1851, the year of the great exhibition at London; the population was then over eighteen millions; 6,000,000 of whom by youth, sickness

<sup>8</sup> Overton, p. 312.

<sup>9</sup> Overton, "English Church in XIX Century," p. 311.

or age, were not in condition to attend church. The worshipers in the Established Church were estimated at 4,100,000; in dissenting bodies, 3,400,000; non-worshipers, about 4,100,000. The places of worship connected with the Established Church were 14,077, with a seating capacity of 4,800,000. Dissenters owned 20,390 places of worship, with a seating capacity of 3,600,000.

Mr. Birks estimates the High Church, Evangelical and Broad Church parties in the Established Church at this time (1851) to be about equally divided, with probably 6,000 clergymen each. Fully two-thirds of the religious strength of England was in the non-conformist bodies and the Evangelical party of the Established Church at the middle of the present century. They represented the aspiration, the spiritual life, the Christian zeal, the philanthropy and evangelical fire of England.

The spiritual preaching of the dissenters and the zeal of the Evangelicals were the religious forces of the kingdom, which were ready to grapple with the new difficulties presented by an unparalleled revolution in the industrial life of the people. The High Church party and the Liberals alike have had a noble work to do in this century, not always understood by their rivals, but to the Dissenters and Evangelicals belong the organizing and manning of the agencies (of which the Association is one) that were called into being to save industrial England. From them came the money, the men, the sympathy and the courage to make the Young Men's Christian Association a success.

#### SEC. 7.—THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.

While these changes (1800-1850) which breathed new life into English Christianity were in progress, a new social era was dawning. The Protestant world was changing its habit of life. The industrial age, with scarcely a note of warning, was beginning. The pro-



foundest sociological fact of modern times is that the civilized world is leaving the country to live in the city. The magnet of the city is an irresistible force. The race is becoming urban. We will not repeat here the oft-told tale of the rise of the city except so far as is necessary to show that it is *the* modern fact which occasioned the Young Men's Christian Association.

Without the rise of the city, the parlors, gymnasiums, reading rooms, educational classes, halls, Bible studies, religious meetings,—the vast organization of half a million young men, with its secretaries, directors, committees, costly buildings and mighty influence would never have been born. The Association movement was founded by a young man who moved from the country to the city. It was founded primarily for young men living away from home in cities; without the wide extent of the city it would have remained simply a London institution, and never have become a world-wide organization. The Young Men's Christian Association is a nineteenth century enterprise. It has the flavor of modern times; it is a city product. Its business methods, its enterprise, its intensity, its weaknesses, too, of superficiality and haste, all bear the stamp of its city origin. To understand Young Men's Christian Associations, we must understand the modern city.

Self-protection, government, commerce and pleasure, built the cities of past centuries. The force that draws men into modern cities is wealth. The startling fact is that just as many people live in cities to-day as can make a living in them. This is the law of city growth. It is as inflexible as the laws of the Medes and Persians. It is their only limitation. Loomis, in his volume, "Modern Cities," shows that the cost of living alone regulates city population.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Loomis' "Modern Cities," page 35. Shaw's "Municipal Government in Great Britain." New York, 1895.

The struggle with disease, poverty and famine shrivelled the size of ancient cities, and only a Rome, where bread was distributed by the government, or a Babylon, where food was raised within the walls, could support a million inhabitants. The discovery of almost unlimited means of increasing production, and the development of rapid transportation, has produced the modern city. Manufacture describes it in a single word. Commerce has been, and is a source of wealth, but manufacture is the chief. Machinery made manufacture possible, manufacture produced wealth, and wealth has produced the modern city. With all its commerce, two-thirds of the population of New York are engaged in some form of manufacturing, and probably an equal proportion of the millions of London.

The possibility of this great increase in wealth has arisen through the invention of machinery. In 1788, Watt invented the steam engine, and the industrial revolution began. "In the discovery of the steam engine, the mother of machines, may be found the central reason for the growth of our nineteenth century cities."<sup>1</sup>

A variety of agencies contributed to the industrial revolution in England. "In 1776, Adam Smith published his 'Wealth of Nations.'" This overthrew the Mercantile Theory, which held that national prosperity could only be secured at the expense of neighboring States, and advocated industrial freedom. "Already in 1762, the Bridgewater canal, the first joint of a net-work of inland water communication was opened. In 1767, Hargreaves introduced the spinning jenny; Arkwright's spinning machine was exhibited in 1768; Crompton's mule was finished in 1779; Cartwright hit upon the idea of the power loom in 1784; the Staffordshire potteries date from 1763."

<sup>1</sup> Loomis' "Modern Cities," page 42.

In 1786, a new commercial treaty stimulated trade between England and France. Between 1800 and 1830, the year the first railroad was operated, a thousand inventions by the application of steam increased the means of production, and began to pile up the wealth of the civilized world, until Mr. Gladstone declares "that the amount of wealth which could be handed down to posterity produced during the first eighteen hundred years of the Christian era was equalled by the production of the first fifty years of this century."<sup>2</sup> He adds, "that an equal amount was produced between the years 1860 and 1875. In 1770, the income of Great Britain was £119,500,000; in 1889 (including Ireland), it reached the enormous sum of £1,285,000,000, and the estimated wealth of the United Kingdom was £9,400,000,000.

With this increase in production has come the wonderful development and cheapening of rapid transit by the application of steam, and more recently, electricity. The world has increased its pace. In 1807, Robert Fulton operated the first steamboat; in 1830, there were cargoes of 24,000,000 tons carried by water; 1889, the water freights were 139,000,000 tons. Since 1829, the miles of railroad have reached 354,300 in Christendom, while the aggregate investment in the railroad carrying trade represents £5,736,000,000. In 1780, it cost £13 to carry a ton of freight from London to Leeds. Flour is now carried to London from Chicago at the rate of 33s. per ton, and from San Francisco by water for 30s.<sup>3</sup>

These mighty agencies have increased production, cheapened food, and have given the opportunity for great multitudes to support themselves by factory labor in cities.

Coincident with this increased opportunity for employment in the city, there has been a corresponding

<sup>2</sup> "Our Country," J. Strong, page 115.

<sup>3</sup> See Munhall's Statistics, 1892.

decrease of demand for labor in the country. The invention of machinery has made it possible for one workman to produce as much as a score by the old methods. The number of agricultural laborers in England in 1831 was 980,000; in fifty years it has declined to 870,000; while the population has increased from 13,990,000 to 26,100,000. This rapid movement from the country to the city began first in Great Britain, and has had there the most pronounced development. The facts have often been presented, but they are startling to the student of society. Josiah Strong, Samuel Loomis, Albert Shaw, and a great variety of writers, have brought them to public notice. England, Germany and the United States have about seventy-five cities of 100,000 population and upwards, and some 300 others with between 25,000 and 100,000 inhabitants. The United States has 353 cities of 10,000 population and over. London is adding 125,000 people annually to its population; New York, Berlin, Chicago and Glasgow, the capitals of the Protestant world, average each nearly 50,000 annual increase in population. In 1818, Liverpool had only 94,300 people, Manchester only 70,000. London, which, in 1818, had 1,129,000, is now the marvel of the world, with over 5,000,000 human souls. Americans are familiar with the summary given by Josiah Strong, in "Our Country," of the development of American cities. In 1790, one-thirtieth of the population of the United States lived in cities of 8,000 inhabitants and over. In 1800, one-twenty-fifth; in 1820, one-twentieth; in 1830, one-sixteenth; in 1840, one-twelfth; in 1850, one-eighth; in 1860, one-sixth; in 1870, one-fifth; in 1880, nearly one-fourth. "In 1780, there were but six cities of over 6,000 population; in 1880, there were 286."

The "Industrial Revolution" has produced the modern city. This sudden crowding into business centers seemed to arouse all the evil passions of the

race, and has sorely tested the religious institutions of the Protestant world. England found herself with a swarming city population, without adequate provision for their bodily, intellectual, social or spiritual needs. The greed of the money-getters outstripped philanthropy and Christian zeal. There was probably as much suffering in body, stunting of intellect, anguish of heart and corruption of soul in the factory cities of England during the first half of this century as in the darkest annals of slavery. This is a bitter indictment, but the facts are appalling. The greed of capitalists who wrung hours of aching toil from infant children and starving women, the wretched hovels in which the laborers were herded without regard to sex, the reign of ruin and the rampant rage of vice, were like a blight on city life. "Persons of all ages and both sexes were collected together in huge buildings, under no moral control, and with no arrangements for the preservation of health, comfort or decency." The epithet, "a factory girl," became a badge of infamy. The "apprentice system," which put thousands of little children into the hands of mill owners, was a merciless slavery. Extra hours, night work, brutal treatment, wretched food, and foul sleeping-pens, wore out their little lives. The cities became sinks of moral iniquity, and, in spite of later efforts to redeem them, surpassing all previous movements of the Christian Church, they are still often spoken of as a menace to civilization, and an evil sore on the body politic.

The important fact to this discussion is that the city is becoming the home of the young men of the Protestant world; young men form the great majority of the industrial army, which annually invades the city from the country. It has already been pointed out that the country no longer needs their labor in the proportion it once did, while the city offers opportunity for advance-

ment and the fascinations of pleasure combined. Loomis, who has given, perhaps, the most successful study of modern cities, says: "Great cities have a special fascination for young men. They offer to the successful high and tempting prizes. There is little in the position of leading merchant, lawyer or physician in a country town to spur the ambition of the young; but those who hold the like positions in the cities are princes and mighty men of the times." "Ambitious fellows prefer a hard race with high stakes." "Who can measure the fascination for the masses of manhood of the great cities' unequalled facilities for instruction and amusement?"<sup>4</sup> Berlin and Chicago have each 300,000 young men; New York, 400,000; London, a million. These young men are a most important factor in social life. They fill the stores, offices and shops of the city, and man the thousand agencies which go to make up the activity of the modern world. They are students in the universities and workmen at the bench. From their number must come the legislators, teachers, preachers, physicians, merchants, manufacturers and workmen who are to guide and mould the Protestant world.

The appalling indifference to religion among multitudes of young men in English cities at this period will appear as we discuss the founding of the London Association. The interesting fact often overlooked is that such a large number of young men of Christian character and zeal for preaching Jesus Christ should have been ready to take hold of a movement like the Young Men's Christian Association. The awakening of young men and young women to active interest in religion and in the welfare of others is one of the achievements of the modern church. The brutal manners, the filthy conversation, the lustful lives, the yielding to un-

<sup>4</sup> "Modern Cities," page 33.



controlled desire, and the impiety of young men "sowing their wild oats" in English cities in 1800 and earlier, cannot be conceived of to-day. In a prize essay for £50, entitled "Our Young Men," by Francis Cox, published by the "British and Foreign Young Men's Society," in London, 1838, we read: "The cruel sports which were once pursued with avidity at wakes, fairs and general holidays, such as single stick, brutal wrestling, bull baiting, and others prevalent among the lower orders, have diminished, some of them have almost disappeared, and even the gentlemanly (?) amusements of cock fighting and the ring, or the sanctioned feats of pugilism, are on the wane." The rise of the city, with its fierce temptations, brought about by the Industrial Revolution, threw young men into great peril; multitudes fell into lives of sin and lawlessness, but the forces of vital religion we have already discussed had also been at work, and had awakened the consciences of a small number of young men who were ready to support any organization inaugurated to carry the Gospel to their fellows. A study of the short-lived earlier movements to benefit young men, which have been many, shows that whatever their weakness of organization as contrasted with the Young Men's Christian Association, they were not the spontaneous rising of young men to help each other. The Young Men's Christian Association is not a mission to young men, much as it has been aided by philanthropists and the ministry. It is an effort by young men to help themselves, an assertion, on the part of Christian young men, of the dignity of their position as Christians and members of society.

We have seen the new problem created by the industrial movement that has housed nearly 40 per cent. of the Protestant world in cities. We have pictured also the awakening vigor of the religious forces of England.

The peril of the city called forth the church in its might. The Church of Jesus Christ arose like a man of war to a battle with a new foe. Countless agencies for purifying and redeeming the modern city have been called into being—city missions in every slum, street preaching, lay helpers' associations, public libraries, mechanics' institutes, various parish organizations, deaconesses's orders, the Salvation Army, Dr. Barnado's Home for Boys, The Workman's Pleasant Sunday Afternoon, temperance societies, Young People's Societies, Sunday Schools, and a host of other agencies, until the church of the present day in Great Britain has become one organized army, directing its most powerful attacks on the evils of the cities. It is estimated that in London £4,000,000 are spent annually for the uplifting, enlightening and blessing of its Christless masses.

With such a Christian sentiment to appeal to, with the young men of the nation in peril, with a nucleus of Christian young men ready to follow, it only needed a leader to rear an institution devoted to the salvation of young men. Such a leader arose in the person of a young man, George Williams, now one of the merchant princes of London, the founder of the Young Men's Christian Association, the man who, more than anyone else, has lived, worked, given and prayed for the young men of his generation.

#### SEC. 8.—ORIGIN OF THE LONDON ASSOCIATION.

##### SIR GEORGE WILLIAMS.

George Williams was born at Ashway Farmhouse, five miles from Dulverton, in southern England, in the year 1821. His father was a prosperous yeoman who owned two large estates, especially adapted to sheep culture. Agriculture had been prosperous, but the era of



the transfer of power from the land-holding class to the cities was already dawning. With rare insight into the signs of the times, young George Williams was destined by his parents for a business career. He was sent to school at a notable private academy called "Glyns' School," where an elder brother and George Hitchcock, who was so soon to be identified with the London Young Men's Christian Association, had spent their school days together. When he was in his fifteenth year, in 1835, George Williams was apprenticed for six years by his father to learn the business of a merchant in the Holmes Drapery Establishment at Bridgewater.

Williams' father paid a premium of thirty pounds for this opportunity. There were then some sixty young men and young women employed in the various departments of the establishment. The Williams family were brought up in the Church of England and attended service at the parish church of Dulverton. However, when George Williams began life among the employees in the Holmes Drapery Establishment at Bridgewater, he had received no deep religious impressions. He was a thoughtless, active, capable young man, with a hasty temper and a warm heart. Among the employees were two or three apprentices who were members of the Independent Church of Bridgewater. These young men exercised a great influence upon Williams. By their example, consecration and loving faith, he was persuaded to give his own life to Jesus Christ. He began to pray and to seek God. This occurred some time in 1836, and marks the beginning of George Williams' life of devotion and Christian service. In the Holmes Drapery House there was a little dark room where the wrapping paper was kept, into which Williams used to slip off alone, when he was tempted, and pour out his soul in prayer to God. He says: "Instead of spending my Sunday afternoons in pleasure as formerly, when

the light came, I began to go to Sunday School. I entered a class and afterwards became a teacher."

The prejudice at this time against the Dissenters was very strong, and it was a great effort for a young man like Williams to rise above it. As a result of his conversion he was filled with a desire to win others to Jesus Christ. The "Principals" of the establishment attended the Independent Chapel, but were not Christians. The life among the young men was careless and immoral. Williams and the two or three Christians who had been the means of his conversion decided to hold prayer meetings in their bedrooms and invite the other young men. These meetings, which were devoted to prayer, singing and short expositions of the Scripture, had a wonderful influence upon the young men of the establishment. In a short time, 27 became Christians, among them one of the proprietors. The young women also held meetings in their lodgings for the women clerks. Williams did not confine his efforts to his fellow-clerks, but with others, in spite of criticism and ridicule, conducted meetings in the villages near Bridgewater. It was a period when laymen were just beginning to be active in Christian service. Mr. Williams says: "There was a freshness about it that gave zest to our efforts. We had no society or organization. We worked because we felt impelled to work."<sup>5</sup>

In 1840, the business at Bridgewater changed hands and Williams' apprenticeship terminated. This year was spent in helping his brothers establish themselves in business, after which, George Williams, now twenty years of age, decided to go to London. His elder brother was accustomed to purchase goods of his old school friend, Mr. George Hitchcock, of the firm of George Hitchcock & Co., 72 St. Paul's Churchyard,

<sup>5</sup> This section is drawn from notes taken in a personal interview with Sir George Williams, in October, 1894.

London. Through the influence of this brother, Williams was received, in October, 1841, into this establishment as a junior assistant, at 35 pounds for the first year. Here, under the shadow of St. Paul's mighty dome, where for generations the restless stream of human life has ebbed and flowed, from Ludgate Hill to Cheap-side, young Williams began his London career.

In 1841, some eighty young men were employed in the different departments of the Hitchcock establishment, working by day at its counters, and lodging by night in the upper apartments. London was then, as now, full of temptations. A writer in 1837, said: "As soon as a young man was introduced into London he found in the immense majority of instances that even lawful business itself was conducted in an unlawful manner." "The exposure to evil outside of business is extreme." "Under the present system, at every few steps our young mechanics in going to or returning from their labors are met with new solicitations to their passions, and are made to drink, gamble and ruin their present and eternal interests."<sup>6</sup> The first Young Men's Christian Association Report (page 12), in 1844, declares, "until recently the young men engaged in the pursuits of business were totally neglected. They were treated as though deprived of mind, as though formed only to labor and sleep, and to sleep and labor, so that they could only go from their beds to the counter, and from the counter to their beds, without a moment for mental or spiritual culture, without the disposition or even the strength for the performance of those devotional exercises which are necessary for the maintenance of a spiritual life.

"But happily for us a brighter day has dawned. The 20,000 young men engaged in the drapery (dry goods) trade and the 30,000 employed in the various other

<sup>6</sup> Francis Cox's "Prize Essay," page 212.

trades of the Metropolis are being regarded as an important portion of society." Rev. William Arthur, M. A., in an address in 1844, before the newly organized Association, said: "Our general assistants (salesmen) in our great establishments have been looked upon as a species of physiological machines from whom a certain amount of work was required, and if that was done nothing more was thought respecting them. Sometimes the more knavish the assistant was, if but successful, the more he was approved. No class has been more neglected or despised." In 1847, a young man writes of the commercial house where he was employed: "During dinner, tea and supper time, nothing but obscene language is going on, such as scenes in brothels, night brawls, etc., and this in the presence of junior hands and apprentices. I am writing these lines within the hearing of those who are playing cards for half-penny the game, swearing at the top of their voices, and calling each other cheats. The heads of the houses leave in the evening for their homes, and leave these to go the broad way that leads to destruction. They go to the theatre and those casinos where they dance and mix with the unfortunates." "We sometimes see the worst characters placed in the most important situations." "Scarcely a week passes but some of the houses find their young men robbing them for the purpose of keeping up their extravagance."<sup>7</sup> A young man who had come up from the country writes in 1847: "We only have a bedroom—no sitting-room. The consequence is that on Sunday we have nowhere to go. If we go to church, what is more miserable than to turn out into the streets—no place to go except a coffee or eating house, where nothing is to be read except the Sunday newspapers."<sup>8</sup> Another writes:

<sup>7</sup> Third London Annual Report.

<sup>8</sup> Third Annual Report.

"I could not have believed it had I not witnessed it myself that so much wickedness could abound in one establishment. We have every sanction given for swearing, betting, horse racing, theatres and every facility afforded for gratifying the worldly thirst for pleasure. Our young men instead of hallowing the Sabbath day spend it on the water or in the numerous excursions." The Fourth Annual Report (page 22), says: "There are few persons who have not lived in the large hives of commerce with which the metropolis abounds who can adequately judge of the real life of the vast majority of those who dwell there. Could the pen faithfully describe the annual shipwreck of good conscience and character which takes place among the commercial young men of London, then it would be more easy to perceive the value of an attempt to carry into their midst the saving health of the Gospel."

Mr. Shipton, the second employed secretary of the London Association, in 1855, writes: "In 1844, there were probably 150,000 young men in London." "Of the assistants in shops and warehouses, by far the larger number lived in the houses of business in which they were employed. They commenced their labor from 7 to 9 in the morning and closed it from 9 to 11 in the evening, while in some seasons the toil of the day did not end until after midnight." "The sleeping apartments were small and badly ventilated. Several slept in the same room, and of the juniors, two often occupied the same bed." "The majority sought their enjoyment in the tavern." "The novice and the veteran in sin, the 'old stager' in London and the youth fresh from the country, occupied one and the same bedroom." "Their conviviality often reached the point of excess, and the moral degradation thus commenced ended in too many cases in a point of debasement ruinous to the



individual and deeply pernicious to those around him.”<sup>9</sup>

It was into such an atmosphere as this, laden with iniquity, that young George Williams came, a consecrated young man, with his heart burning with love and zeal for Jesus Christ. He worked during the day with his eighty fellow-clerks, and at night slept in a small bed-room in one of the upper floors of the establishment. The loneliness, temptation and irreligion of his surroundings led him to pour out his heart in prayer that he might find a fellow-worker among the young men. In less than a month the house secured the services of J. Christopher Smith, a young man of about twenty-four years of age, who was a devoted Christian and a student of the Bible. Christopher Smith became George Williams' room-mate. The intimate relations, the Christian fellowship of these two young men will never be known, but the power of their lives exerted an influence which is to-day felt throughout the world. Through their efforts several young men in the establishment became Christians. Bedroom prayer meetings similar to the Bridgewater meetings were established and led by Williams, generally in his own room, and some months later a Bible class was begun which was taught by Christopher Smith. A missionary society was founded among the clerks in the house, which between the years 1842 and 1844 raised fifty pounds among the young men. Also a literary society for mutual improvement, at which the young men read essays and gave addresses on such subjects as “Astronomy,” “The History of St. Paul's Cathedral,” and the like. Young men in the house began to seek Jesus Christ and were converted.

Larger numbers began to attend the prayer meetings and the Bible classes. In this emergency, Mr. Williams and the others decided to ask the proprietor, Mr. George

<sup>9</sup> Report of Paris Conference, 1855, page 59.

Hitchcock, for a larger room for the meetings. He was an energetic and successful business man, but had little or no interest in religion. The young men approached him with much hesitation, but presented the matter with such earnestness, that it touched his heart. The room was granted, and Mr. Hitchcock himself was led before long to become a Christian. He became a hearty supporter of the young men in their efforts, which were remarkably successful, resulting before June, 1844, in the conversion of some sixteen young men in the establishment. The conversion of George Hitchcock is an important step in the development of the Young Men's Christian Association. He was a man of wealth and large business acquaintance. Without the influence of such a friend the movement could hardly have made such rapid advancement. Early in 1844, he described the work among his young men to Mr. W. D. Owen, the proprietor of another large dry goods establishment. Mr. Owen, through his "principal assistant,"<sup>10</sup> Mr. James Smith inaugurated similar meetings among the young men of his business house, in Great Coram Street, which were blessed with like results. In two other establishments prayer meetings were carried on of a similar character. It was now May, 1844. Four houses of business were holding prayer meetings among their young men. The Metropolitan Drapers' Association was urging early closing in order to give the young men opportunity for improvement. A number of mechanical institutes existed in London and several societies for mutual improvement had been organized by young men. Towards the close of May, 1844, an important incident occurred on Black Friars Bridge, which can best be described in the words of one of the two persons present—Mr. Edward Beaumont, an assistant in the Hitchcock establishment, who had become a Christian through the influence of

<sup>10</sup> Shipton, *History of the Young Men's Christian Association*, p. 33.

George Williams and his fellow-workers. In a letter to Mr. George Williams, written many years afterwards, he thus describes the way the idea of an Association first found expression. "On one Sunday evening, in the latter end of May, 1844, you accompanied me to Surrey Chapel. After walking a few minutes in silence you said, pressing my arm and addressing me familiarly, as you were in the habit of doing, 'Teddy, are you prepared to make a sacrifice for Christ?' I replied, 'If called upon to do so, I hope and trust I can.' You then told me that you had been deeply impressed with the importance of introducing religious services, such as we enjoyed, into every large establishment in London, and that you thought that if a few earnest, devoted, and self-denying men could *be found to unite themselves together* for this purpose, that with earnest prayer God would smile upon their efforts, and much good might be done. I need not say that I heartily concurred, and said 'I would gladly assist in such an effort.' You told me at the same time that I was the only person to whom you had mentioned it. This conversation which occupied the whole of our time going and returning from Surrey Chapel was again resumed the following week, and collecting together three or four, it may be more, of the religious young men of the establishment, the matter was gone more fully into, and if I mistake not, the conversation took place one evening after our prayer meeting and Bible class, when a few of the religious young men remained behind. We then resolved to call a meeting of all the religious young men of the establishment, to meet on Thursday, June 6th, 1844, to consider the importance and practicability of establishing such an Association."<sup>11</sup>

On this very day, May 31st, that the young men at

<sup>11</sup> Stevenson's Historical Record, page 16.



Hitchcock & Co.'s were conferring together, Mr. Owen's principal assistant, Mr. James Smith, who had inaugurated the prayer meeting in the Owen Establishment, had written Mr. Geo. Williams: "I have been truly rejoiced to hear that the Lord is doing a great work in your house, and I hope that the leaven thus set will go on increasing abundantly. I am engaged here in the same work, but stand almost alone, and from what I have heard, I am induced to say, 'Come over and help us.' We have a prayer meeting this evening at half-past eight. 'If you could by any possibility be here at eight, I should be glad as I want to advise with you on another subject in reference to our trade, viz.: whether anything can be done in other houses.'"<sup>1</sup>

These two meetings were held on May 31st, 1844, and the historic meeting already referred to arranged by George Williams for the following week, June 6th, 1844, at the establishment of George Hitchcock & Company. George Williams invited Mr. James Smith to attend this meeting for June 6th.

On the evening of June 6th, 1844, twelve young men, one of whom, Mr. James Smith, was from the Owen Silk Establishment, met in the room granted by George Hitchcock to the young men of his house for prayer meetings, to consider the advisability of forming a "Society for Improving the Spiritual Condition of Young Men engaged in the drapery and other trades." The leading spirit in this meeting was George Williams. The work at Bridgewater and in the Hitchcock House had convinced him that a few determined, Christian young men, united by a common purpose, could wield a great influence over other young men. This meeting decided to form a society for the purpose of introducing religious meetings of a similar character into houses of business in London. A committee was appointed, of

<sup>1</sup> Shipton, *Association History*, page 33.

which Mr. James Smith, of the Owen Silk Establishment, the most prominent of their number, was made chairman. This committee was instructed to prepare a Constitution. Mr. Christopher Smith, at a meeting held two weeks later, suggested the name, which has been universally adopted, "The Young Men's Christian Association." The constitution as finally set forth reads as follows:

"1. That this society be called the 'Young Men's Christian Association.'

2. That the object of this Association shall be the improvement of the spiritual condition of young men engaged in the drapery and other trades, by the introduction of religious services among them.

3. That the affairs of the Association be in the hands of a committee of management comprising a President, Vice-President, a Treasurer, two Secretaries and twelve Committeemen, with power to add to their number, seven to form a quorum.

4. That the Committee meet once a month (or oftener if required), for the dispatch of general business.

5. That two social tea meetings be held in the year (the time of such meetings to be left to the discretion of the Committee), at which a report of the Society's proceedings shall be read.

6. That a general meeting be held once a fortnight (or oftener if required), for the purpose of hearing reports from members of the progress of the work of God in the various establishments, and for such other purposes as the Committee shall see fit to determine, and that all meetings shall be open for members and those friends whom they may consider proper persons to bring, and to those who shall receive invitations from the Committee.

7. That the Chairman of all general meetings be proposed by the Committee, and elected by a majority

of the members, and that all meetings shall begin and end with prayer.

8. That no person shall be considered eligible to become a member of this Association, unless he be a member of a Christian Church, or there be sufficient evidence of his being a converted character."

Three rules follow relating to the election of members by the Committee; a membership fee of sixpence, and dues of sixpence per quarter, and the issuing of a membership ticket.

SEC. 9.—FROM THE FOUNDING TO NOVEMBER, 1845.

LUDGATE HILL COFFEE HOUSE.

The movement now contemplated a wider work than the employees of a single business establishment, and it became necessary to secure a meeting room in some public place for the fortnightly gathering of the members from different houses. Mr. Williams arranged that these meetings, which were soon attended by 70 young men, should be held at a coffee house in Ludgate Hill, for which they paid half a crown a week rent. Several weeks later, on the 25th of July, 1844, a circular letter was sent to a large number of Christian young men in various houses of business, as follows:

NO. 72 ST. PAUL'S CHURCHYARD.

"DEAR SIR:—Suffer us to bring before your notice some important considerations to which, for some time past, our minds have been directed, and which intimately concern the eternal welfare of a large class of your fellow mortals. We have looked with deep concern and anxiety upon the almost totally neglected spiritual condition of the young men engaged in the pursuit of business, and feel desirous by the assistance of God to make some effort in order to improve it. \* \* \* We have seriously and carefully consulted as to the best means by which to accomplish so great a work, and have come to the decision that there is nothing so calculated to discountenance immorality and vice, and to promote a spirit of serious inquiry among the class in which our lot is cast, as the in-

troducton of religious services among them. \* \* \* We shall not be surprised if such a proposal as this be reckoned by some as a Utopian scheme. \* \* \* We are likewise aware of the numerous difficulties which in many places will present themselves, and the obloquy and contempt which such a course of procedure will inevitably bring down upon the promoters and supporters of such an attempt from the irreligious members of some of our large establishments. \* \* \* But shall persecution keep us back from attempting the salvation of souls? A society is now formed, the object of which is the promotion of the spiritual welfare of young men engaged in the drapery and other trades by the introduction of religious services among them. We earnestly entreat your Christian co-operation in this great work.

\* \* \* \*

Signed on behalf of the Committee,

JOHN C. SYMONS, } Secretaries.  
WILLIAM CREESE, }

This circular was sent to every Christian young man engaged in the drapery and other trades, whose names the Committee could secure.

The coffee room at Ludgate Hill became too small, and after some difficulty a larger room was secured at Radley's Hotel, 182 Black Friars Road. Here, on November 8th, five months after the meeting for organization, a "tea meeting of the members and friends of the Young Men's Christian Association" was held, at which Mr. W. D. Owen, the prominent silk merchant already mentioned, presided; about two hundred persons, including several clergymen and ministers, "sat down to tea."

The report penned at that time without a thought that it would be read fifty years later, by young men thousands of miles distant, is full of the same faith, courage and hope as the circular just quoted. In speaking of the fortnightly meetings, the report says: "These meetings soon became numerous attended, and were rendered of an interesting and profitable character by the reports of members from various houses. The services which the 'Young Men's Christian Association' is established to promote are chiefly

prayer meetings, and wherever it is practicable, Bible classes. The Committee recommend that religious young men residing in the different houses should establish these in their sleeping rooms, and that the unconverted among them should be invited to attend."

In a house where forty persons are employed a member writes: "We rejoice to say we have an altar raised to God within our walls. At first, two of us met once a week for the purpose. We met with a good deal of ridicule and opposition, but this did not daunt us. Instead of two, the number who now attend is eleven; one, I am happy to say, has 'stepped into the liberty of the children of God,' and is now a member of Rev. J. Sherman's Church."

Another writes: "We have a prayer meeting once a week, to which we invite young men who are not religious; several regularly attend and appear to feel interested." One writes from another house: "Two have joined themselves to the people of God; several others are becoming inquirers." Another house reports: "Three persons were converted in our meeting, one of whom has become a local preacher."

The report of the first five months of work, in concluding, says: "The Committee cannot but feel encouraged by their success. There are at present connected with the Association about 70 enrolled members; the greatest possible caution has been exercised in their selection. We would rather see the names of men willing to be 'instant in season and out of season in the work of the Lord' than behold a long and numerous list of those without the power of godliness. Religious services are now established in fourteen houses, into ten of which they were introduced by the Association. There are also two districts in which young men from different houses meet together for united prayer."

The first result of the Association as shown in the

report given at their first tea gathering was the establishment of religious meetings in houses of business. This was looked upon by the young men themselves as their most important work. It was a noble beginning, but even more important was the establishing of the joint fortnightly meetings; first at the Ludgate Hill coffee house (St. Martin's), afterwards on account of increased numbers removed to Radley's Hotel, and later, as we shall see, to Sergeant's Inn. This, with the similar meeting in another section of the city referred to in the report, was the real germ of the Young Men's Christian Association. Here the young men met for prayer and mutual encouragement, here their reports were given, here their plans were made, here they received inspiration for the trying work of the week in their own establishments. It was a fellowship meeting of believers, who received encouragement from each other, and from prayer. Here was born the young men's evangelistic meeting, which has been the rallying center of the Young Men's Christian Association for half a century.

In three years the genius and zeal of George Williams had rallied around him the Christian young men of fourteen different commercial houses of the metropolis, into a compact, close organization, inspired with one purpose—the desire to save the young men of London. We must go one step further at this “tea gathering” on November 8th, 1844. Mr. W. D. Owen, who had shown such deep interest in the movement, suggested that the Association raise a fund and employ a missionary to devote his whole time to Christian work among young men, as the representative of the society. In accordance with this suggestion, on November 14th, 1844, at a special meeting, the Committee of management unanimously resolved “to employ a missionary to act as assistant secretary, to attend all



general meetings of the Association; to assist in conducting services in houses where they want help; to establish and render as efficient as possible district associations; to form, by communicating with Christian young men in the large towns and cities of the kingdom, branch Associations (it may sometimes be necessary that he should visit these towns and cities)—to visit young men in illness, and make himself generally useful among the class to which his efforts will be directed by pointing them ‘to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world.’ ”

Through the efforts of the young men, and the liberality of George Hitchcock, seventy of the hundred and thirty pounds needed were secured, and an effort made to find a suitable man for the position. After considering twenty-eight different applicants, most of whom were ministers or clergymen, Mr. T. H. Tarlton, a layman, was selected to become the first agent of the London “Young Men’s Christian Association.” In January, 1845, a branch Association with 50 members was organized in the West End. On February 14th, a public gospel meeting for young men was held; on March 6th, 1845, nine months after the meeting for organization in the little room of George Hitchcock’s establishment, the second “tea meeting” of members and friends of the Association was held at Radley’s Hotel, Blackfriars Bridge. The work now began to attract the attention of Christian employers and of pastors. Rev. Geo. W. Noel, a prominent minister, presided at this gathering: “Upwards of 300 persons sat down to tea, among whom were several very influential persons connected with the drapery trade.” The chairman “was supported by four other ministers, the Rev. John Cumming, Rev. William Arthur, Rev. Samuel Martin, and Rev. John Branch.”<sup>2</sup> The report given

<sup>2</sup> Shipton, “History of the Association,” page 35.

at this meeting is full of enthusiasm, and breathes the courage born of success. The Committee said: "The number of members now amounts to 160. Our usual fortnightly meetings are largely attended and are rendered increasingly interesting and profitable. It is the design of the Committee to extend the benefits of the Association to all parts of the metropolis, by means of various branches. Nor would they confine themselves to the metropolis, but through the medium of their missionary extend themselves and form similar Associations in all the large towns and cities of the kingdom. They believe the day is not far distant when in *every house of business* an altar shall be raised to the God of Heaven."

The activity of the Association increased rapidly under the direction of Mr. Tarlton. It soon became clear that if they were to undertake seriously the problem of winning the young men of London, the work must be conducted on a more extended scale, and adapted to the needs of all young men. It was felt that the establishment of prayer meetings and Bible classes in houses of business was not sufficient for so extended an undertaking. Through the liberality of George Hitchcock, attractive headquarters for the Association were now secured at Sergeant's Inn, No. 14 Fleet Street. Mr. Hitchcock furnished the apartments and paid the rent. Here an office was provided for Mr. Tarlton, a room for the fortnightly meeting, and later, one for Mr. Williams' Bible class. This Bible class, taught by George Williams, was attended by young men about 50 in number, who had recently become Christians, or who were desirous of learning about Jesus Christ.

The young men of the Association also felt that they could not carry on such a great enterprise requiring money and wisdom, without the support of men older than themselves, and men prominent in the metropolis. Mr. R. C. L. Bevan, a leading banker of London, was ac-



cordingly asked to assume the duties of President of the Association. "Mr. Bevan did not attend our meeting, but represented us outside," Mr. Williams once said in conversation, many years later. "Twenty-two pastors of both the Church of England and of dissenting denominations accepted positions as Vice-Presidents, and Mr. George Hitchcock, who had already done so much for the Association, became its Treasurer," a position he filled until 1864.

The Association now decided upon a most important step. Until March, 1845, the Young Men's Christian Association had been a purely religious organization. Its aim was clearly defined: the winning of young men to Jesus Christ, and the building in them of Christian character. The important fact to be noticed is that in the pursuance of this aim the Young Men's Christian Association has been led step by step to minister to the mental, then the social, and lastly to the physical needs of young men, as well as to their spiritual natures. This is an important, religious and sociological fact. In serving Jesus Christ, Christians are led to serve their fellowmen in any capacity which the needs of the times suggest. The Young Men's Christian Association on the one hand has been led to contemplate the nature of young men as a whole, and to aim at their symmetrical development, and on the other hand to contemplate the religion of Jesus Christ as adapted to redeem the whole man—body, soul, and spirit. There has been much difference of opinion among Association leaders as to whether the aim to provide social, intellectual and physical advantages for young men is legitimate for an institution which professes simply to "extend the Kingdom of Christ among young men." Two positions have been taken: The first and earliest historically is that the establishment of an institution, under the management of Christian young men, to pro-

vide the various agencies which young men need for symmetrical development, brings young men who are not Christians into friendly relations with young men who are Christians, and enables these Christian young men to win the others to Jesus Christ. This is a great fact, of which the Young Men's Christian Association is a fifty years' demonstration. It rests upon a sociological truth—the power of environment. It is the recognition of this truth, and the embodiment of it in organized form, which has shaped the policy of the Young Men's Christian Association. The Association has demonstrated that practical agencies in the hands of Christian men may be a means of drawing men who are not Christians into fellowship with men who are, and so lead them to become followers of Jesus Christ.

The second position which has been taken by many Association leaders is that providing physical, social and intellectual opportunities for young men is a good in itself. That the Christian religion demands the symmetrical development of the whole man in all his powers—body, soul and spirit, and that Christians in serving Jesus Christ, must, to the full extent of their ability, help their fellow men, not only in spiritual, but in temporal matters as well, if they have need; that “extending the Kingdom of Christ among young men” necessitates the symmetrical development of all the powers of young manhood. Both are right. Practical agencies under Christian management do lead men to become Christians; serving Jesus Christ does lead Christians to provide for the needs of the whole man. Upon these two truths—the power of environment to mould character, and the adaptation of the religion of Jesus Christ to redeem manhood—body, soul and spirit, the Young Men's Christian Association rests its claim for a place among the agencies of the Church.

The Committee in charge of the new London Associ-

ation were actuated by both motives, though especially by the first. Between the "tea evening" at Radley's Hotel in March, and the first anniversary of the Association held at the same place a few months later in November, the new plans were formulated. A new clause appears in the constitution which reads: "The object of this Association shall be the improvement of the spiritual and *mental* condition of young men engaged in houses of business, by the introduction of family or social prayer, Bible classes, Mutual Improvement Societies, or any other plan strictly in accordance with the Scriptures."<sup>3</sup>

The first annual report states that the article describing the admission of members is altered so as to provide only that applicants give credible evidence of conversion. The report also states, "Since the last meeting (the March previous), your Committee have added to their plan the formation of Mutual Improvement Societies, as in many large houses containing upwards of eighty to one hundred young men, no Christian young man is found, or if there be one, his position is so isolated that he is prevented from carrying out the other part of our plan. Now many unconverted young men would assist and feel interested in a Mutual Improvement Society, so would principals of houses, and we should deem it no unimportant result if in any instance we can lead to the library of useful knowledge, rather than to cards and billiards, to the cigar divan, concert room, theatre or the seductive retreat." As a part of this enlarged programme, a course of popular lectures to young men was announced to be delivered by leading ministers and laymen of London, to begin on December 9th, 1845. This lecture course, known as the Exeter Hall Series, became a remarkable agency in stimulating the intellectual life of young men. As a pioneer in the

<sup>3</sup> First Annual Report, Nov. 6th, 1845.

lecture field, the influence of this movement cannot be measured. It has reached all over the Anglo-Saxon world.

Two public tea gatherings of the friends of its work had been held during the year by the Association, at which reports were read of the society's progress. The first anniversary was announced for November 6th, 1845. Three hundred and thirty-five persons, among them many noted clergymen, sat down to tea at this first anniversary meeting at Radley's Hotel.<sup>4</sup> It was one year and five months since twelve young men, unknown, without influence, without money, without friends, had met in the humble bedroom of George Williams to pray for the young men of London. The result was already a marvelous testimony to their zeal, their wisdom, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Born in the revival among George Hitchcock's young men, an Association had been inaugurated numbering 200 young laymen of all denominations in 18 different commercial establishments of London; managed by a Committee elected by a majority of the members; with a leading banker as President; a prominent merchant as Treasurer; 22 prominent ministers of every denomination as Vice-Presidents; with such prominent citizens as Samuel Morley (who afterwards gave 5,000 pounds toward the purchase of a home for the Association) willing to give an address at the annual meeting; with rooms nicely furnished as headquarters, where Bible classes and prayer meetings were conducted; a paid agent devoting his entire time to the interests of the Association, the whole movement animated with the purpose to improve young men spiritually and intellectually by any means strictly in accordance with the Word of God. Here was the beginning of the fundamental idea of the Young Men's Christian Asso-

<sup>4</sup> First Annual Report.

ciation,—that the religion of Jesus Christ through His Church is intended to save, redeem and develop the whole man, body, soul and spirit—an idea which has become dominant in the modern church, and which was to find its first organized expression in this Association.

This was not recognized fully at the time. The only effort was to adapt the work to the needs of young men. Years afterwards, when physical education had been added to mental, spiritual, and social improvement, Dr. Luther Gulick gave utterance to the ideal toward which the Association is striving (Philadelphia Convention, 1889). He said: "From a scientific standpoint, the Associations have a very valuable foundation for their work in the fact that they are working for young men, not simply for their bodies, minds and souls, but for the salvation, development and training of the whole man complete, as God made him." Here was a new force—an inter-denominational association of young laymen, animated with a burning love for Christ, standing as pioneers behind three great ideas which have become characteristic of English and American Christianity:

The union of denominations for service regardless of creeds.

The salvation of the whole man, which has broadened out into the Institutional Church and the present practical interest in sociology.

The recognition of young people as a factor in Christian work, which has developed into the marvelous young people's organizations of the United States.

The Young Men's Christian Association, with all the credit given to it, has never been fully recognized by the Christian public as the first organization to give expression to these three modern movements on a large scale. It has been the pioneer in them all. In the

face of criticism and inexperience it has resolutely entered new and untried paths, and has demonstrated the value of its methods and the truth of its principles.

The Association was inaugurated in a revival on a purely religious basis, upon a strictly evangelical platform. It has held tenaciously to its evangelistic and evangelical origin. While clinging to its faith, it has risen to the practical position of James, that "faith without works is dead." The Association has become a social factor, because it is a religious force.

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS WITH NORTON SMITH AND  
WILLIAM CREESE, TWO OF THE FOUNDERS  
OF THE LONDON ASSOCIATION.

It may be interesting to see something of the early working of the Association, both before and after it emerged from its birthplace in the Hitchcock establishment in St. Paul's Churchyard.

In May, 1894, I called upon Mr. Norton Smith, for years a prominent business man in London, who was in Mr. Hitchcock's employ between October, 1841, and June, 1844. He was a brother of Christopher W. Smith, Mr. Williams' fellow-worker. During our conversation, he said: "Christopher, my brother, came to London from Norwich, in October, 1841, fifty-three years ago. He was then twenty-four years of age, four years older than Williams, and had been a Christian about four years. My brother remained with the firm for fifty years, until almost the close of his life. He and George Williams slept together in the same bed. I was one of the four who occupied the same bedroom. My brother was a great Bible student, and would often get up at five o'clock in the morning to study. He learned Greek, and employed a Jew to teach him Hebrew. He was always scholarly and studious in his



habits, and very thorough and painstaking. He started a Bible class, which was held in our room, and which was attended by 15 to 20 of the young men. Prayer meetings were held in different bedrooms, but I remember one more especially held every week in our bedroom, which was led by George Williams. He was a very earnest, devoted Christian, an impetuous, ardent spirit, and a man of great courage. We had also a Mutual Improvement Society for lectures by members. I remember I gave one on 'St. Paul's Cathedral.' We had declamations and elocution exercises and wrote several stories. George Williams went around every Saturday to receive the two-pence, or whatever the young men would give for foreign missions. The anniversary of this Society became later quite an important meeting, which both Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock attended. The Society has existed for fifty years.

"My brother drew up the first circular, and suggested the name of the Association. After the organization, weekly meetings were held in the Coffee House on Ludgate Hill, and then at Radley's Hotel, where some of the annual meetings were held. Mr. R. C. L. Bevan, who became President of the Association, was a banker of large means, and later gave 5,000 pounds toward the purchase of Exeter Hall for the Association. He was a prominent Christian worker. Mr. T. H. Tarlton, the first missionary (secretary), who afterwards became a clergyman of the Church of England, was an earnest, beautiful spirit, a good speaker, seraphic in address. When the 'early closing movement' began, Mr. Hitchcock made a noble start. He was among the very first to encourage 'early closing,' without regard to what others did. I left his employ shortly after the Association was established, but have always remained a member of the Association, though, since I moved to the suburbs, I have not been able to be active."



In June, at the Jubilee Convention (1894), the writer had a conversation with Mr. William Creese, one of the first secretaries of the Association. He said: "George Williams and Christopher Smith entered Mr. Hitchcock's establishment in 1841. They had started a Bible class and a prayer meeting before I came. Through their influence, Mr. Hitchcock had already become a Christian. I was employed by the firm in 1843. Mr. Hitchcock engaged me without seeing me, through the recommendation of Mr. Edward Beaumont, who showed him one of my letters. I received thirty pounds a year. When I came, Mr. Hitchcock took me into his office, and said: 'You please God, and you will please me.' There were about one hundred of us, fifteen or sixteen were members of the church. I was of the Church of England. George Williams was an Independent. At the meeting for organization, there were three Methodists, three Independents, three Presbyterians, and three Church of England. We thought we were not doing enough for the young men of our house. We had been reading Finney's 'Revival Lectures, and his 'Autobiography,' and they had a great influence over us. We held a series of revival meetings, in which quite a number were reached; one, the president of a 'Free and Easy Club,' at a public house. We divided the eighty or ninety in the house who were not Christians equally among us, five or six for each of us. It was done with great care. We took no pledge, but each one worked and prayed for the ones assigned to him, and invited them to attend church. This work was wonderfully blessed. One morning, Williams came down to his work and said to me, with great earnestness, 'Rogers will be converted; you speak to him.' Rogers was the president of the 'Free and Easy,' at the 'Goose and Gridiron.' I thought, 'can any good thing come out of Nazareth?' but I

watched him as he worked. He looked different from usual, and avoided people. I felt sure he was 'under conviction.' At my first opportunity I had a talk with him, and as a result he yielded, and became a true Christian. Williams said to me later, 'I had been praying for him that morning, and it seemed as if an answer came direct from God, which said, 'Yes.' We worked and prayed, especially for the men assigned to us. Williams was a 'son of thunder.' We gave him the hardest of the lot; he was a tremendous personal worker. I never knew his equal."

SEC. 10.—DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARENT ASSOCIATION FROM NOVEMBER, 1845-1851.

The Association leaders were without experience, facing a new problem, the winning of the young men of London. They already recognized that these young men had both spiritual and intellectual needs. From this time forth the work has always included these two features. The Constitution had thrown down the broad declaration that this purpose should be achieved by any means strictly in accordance with the Word of God. New members began to crowd into the organization, and the room occupied in Sergeant's Inn was not large enough to contain them. A new thought was pressing upon the minds of the Committee of Management—they saw the great numbers of young men in London who were desirous of improvement, but who were not Christians. They had already seen how these young men could be influenced by "Mutual Improvement Societies," organized in different houses of business, and step by step led into the prayer meeting and Bible class, and many of them influenced to become Christians. They decided, therefore, to open rooms and invite this class of young men "to a well-selected library, to classes for mental culture under Christian teachers, and to rooms

adapted to their use, where, withdrawn from the temptation of ungodly society, they might spend their evenings in suitable companionship, or in the pursuit of useful information.”<sup>5</sup>

Accordingly, in 1848, after an earnest effort, larger and more attractive rooms were secured on Gresham Street, a library, which soon numbered a thousand volumes was opened for use, also a reading room with current papers and reviews, and educational classes in practical branches. Opportunity was also given for companionship and social intercourse. The rooms were not thrown open as a public resort as yet, but this was the first recognition of the craving of young men for companionship with each other, to satisfy which rapidly became the third great aim of the Association.

Young men who were not professed Christians, for a small fee were given a ticket entitling them to the various privileges of the Association, except taking part in the management. They were called “*associates*.” In taking this step, the Committee took great care to have it distinctly understood that they were not lowering the standard of membership, but simply increasing the opportunity for the “members” to exercise an influence over a larger number of young men. The report for 1849 thus states the Committee’s purpose (page 13):

“That without in the slightest degree impairing the distinctive character and design of membership in the Association, of the value of which every year has brought additional proof, many young men of good moral character may be provided for, by the society, under the simple plan of a money subscription, and that by this means in widening our sphere of influence we will be fulfilling our mission, and by God’s help promoting more largely the spiritual improvement of young men.” Thus the Association entered the field

<sup>5</sup> Shipton’s History, p. 72.

as a social resort for young men, and added to its Constitution by admitting young men of good moral character as "associates." This distinction of the two classes of members is of the utmost importance in understanding the development of the Young Men's Christian Association. It was the logical culmination of the policy already adopted. In order to bring young men who were not Christians under the influences of young men who were, and at the same time preserve the spiritual aim and character of the Association, these two classes of membership were a necessity.

The Association movement was about to step forth as a world-wide organization. Other societies for young men with similar objects had arisen, flourished, extended over considerable territory, exerted a marked influence and then disappeared, but this organization was based upon vital principles, which were destined to give it a continued life. It had many strong features, but there are two principles which have given the Association permanency and success:

(1) The placing of the management and control in the hands, only, of men who had consecrated themselves to Jesus Christ.

(2) The unswerving devotion to the aim of winning young men to become Christians.

The Associations have extended over a wide territory, they have adapted themselves to varying surroundings, and have used countless agencies, but they have invariably been true to these two principles, or they have ceased to exist.

We pass now to consider the development during the years 1845-1851, first of the spiritual, second of the intellectual, and third of the social agencies of the Association.

#### RELIGIOUS WORK.

The Society now (1845-1851) began to carry on a

widely extended activity. The heart of the church had awakened to its appeals. Christian business men were watching its efforts with interest. The Evangelical Alliance, which has worked in such close harmony with the Association, was founded in 1846, and rallied all denominations on a common platform. The Evangelical party in the Established Church, and the Non-Conformists were redoubling their zeal to win the city. "Early closing" became an accomplished fact in the winter of 1849. The Exeter Hall preaching services for Sunday evening, started by the "Evangelicals" of the Established Church, then forbidden by the church authorities and re-undertaken by the Dissenters, soon developed into the Sunday Theatre services, in which Lord Shaftesbury took a prominent part.<sup>6</sup> There was a strong public sympathy behind a movement which aimed to save young men.

The first form of direct spiritual endeavor outside of commercial houses which the Young Men's Christian Association undertook was the devotional meeting for the members of the new organization. Members of the Association carried on prayer meetings, Bible classes, or Mutual Improvement Societies, in the various houses of business in which they were employed, and then came together to talk over the work of the week, and pray for spiritual power and refreshment. This meeting, at first held once a fortnight, but very soon weekly, on a week-day evening, was attended by members and such friends as they chose to invite, and also by young men to whom the Committee gave invitations. The attendance by 1847 numbered 80 young men at the Parent Association.

The Annual Report for 1851 (page 19) says: "The meetings for prayer have been from the commencement of the Association one of the chief channels of its life

<sup>6</sup> Hodder's "Life of Shaftesbury."

and usefulness. At the central and district meetings, there are about three hundred young men, who thus meet together regularly. Very many young Christians who have to contend against the unprincipled push for gain, or the miasma of impure conversation, have found at these meetings the emotions of a spiritual life quickened, and have gained courage to confess Christ before his enemies." Testimonies of individual members of the Association and of young men who were led to become Christians through these devotional meetings abound in the reports.

The prayer meeting for members and invited friends was one of the powerful spiritual agencies during the "Formative Period" of the English work, and one destined to become a permanent feature.

The second development in the direct spiritual work was the establishment of a Bible class for Sunday afternoon, by the secretary, Mr. Tarlton, in June, 1845. This class soon numbered 38 young men. A second Bible class was conducted on a week-day evening by George Williams. "Young men on their arrival from the country were immediately introduced to these classes by some member, if found willing to attend."<sup>7</sup>

These classes were not intended for advanced Bible study, but were composed of young Christians or young men seeking spiritual light. The one led by George Williams was especially adapted for recently converted young men. The Sunday afternoon class aimed directly to win men who were not Christians to a decision. An incident recorded in the Second Annual Report (p. 15), November, 1846, gives a picture of the work of these classes: "About nine months since a member of the Association invited an unconverted young man to go with him to the Bible class in Sergeant's Inn. He willingly consented, and continued to attend regularly.

<sup>7</sup> Page 14, Second Annual Report.



Some time elapsed without any apparent effect being produced on his mind, but after a time the truth found its way to his heart through the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, and he is now a sincere and humble follower of the Saviour. No sooner had he felt the value of his own soul, than his attention was directed to the spiritual welfare of his most intimate companion. Having described to him the change of mind he had experienced, he prevailed on him to attend the Bible class, which through God's blessing has resulted in his conversion. Both are now actively engaged as Sunday-school teachers, and have offered themselves for admission to the visible church of Christ."

"These classes are for young men not members of churches, and form a distinctly evangelistic effort. There are no members of the Association present except those who are engaged in the conduct of the necessary arrangements, it being the object of the Association that all who through grace have believed, should at once take part in Sunday-school or ragged school teaching, or in some of those varied instrumentalities by which the Gospel is carried to the destitute and the perishing on the Lord's Day." <sup>8</sup>

A third Bible class was formed in 1848. Bible study as a means of winning young men and strengthening young Christians has ever remained a prominent feature of the movement. The Association is founded upon the Word of God.

Evangelistic Bible classes were the chief means used at the rooms of the London Association for winning young men to become Christians. This has been true, more in England than in America, where the "Men's Gospel Meetings" have become the chief agency. Bible classes have been used more in America as a means of developing Christians and Christian workers.

<sup>8</sup>"Occasional Paper," No. 1, 1853, Gresham Street, London, p. 7.



The Annual Report for 1849 says: "The classes for Biblical instruction, and the devotional meetings, may be regarded as the arteries and sinews of the Association." "It is, therefore, with gratitude that the Committee report that their vigor has not been impaired, but rather augmented by the external effort of the past year. In the last report (1848) the average weekly attendance at the three Bible classes was stated to be 110. For some time past it has averaged 200."

The chief work of the Association during this period was not, however, the work done at the headquarters, where the Bible classes and prayer meetings assembled. The Association was conceived of as a body of young men working for Jesus Christ, "in the sphere of their daily calling." Through all this period the organizing and conducting of prayer meetings and group Bible classes in houses of business continued to be a leading, perhaps the chief feature of the Association's activity. Untold blessings followed this effort; testimonies similar to those already quoted abound in the early reports. At the close of the second year (the fall of 1846), religious services had been introduced and were maintained throughout this period in twenty different houses of business employing no less than a thousand young men. At one time the number of houses increased to thirty.

The underlying principle of this work is alluded to frequently in the early reports—"That the duty of the members should be to exert a Christian influence in the sphere of their daily calling." This constant testimony to the truth of the Christian religion bore abundant fruit. The members came to the meetings of the Association for inspiration and to report their work, and then dispersed through the houses of business during the week and to Sunday-schools and churches and missions on the Sabbath, to engage in Christian endeavor.

The report for 1849, after summing up the achievement of the year, repeats this thought: It says:—"We would affectionately suggest to our brethren that the supreme aim of your daily life should be to bring glory to your Redeemer, and that the most appropriate sphere for the attainment of this object is that of your daily calling."

The nature of the work in these business establishments may be seen from the following account taken from the report for 1847. A member writes: "We have more than a hundred young men in our establishment, thirty-seven of whom are members of the Church of Christ. It is our privilege to meet every morning for half an hour for family worship before commencing the duties of the day. On Tuesday evening we have a Bible class, and on Saturday evening a prayer meeting. Both are well attended and often prove times of great spiritual profit. We have also a Mutual Improvement Society for the deliverance of lectures, debates, etc. The average attendance is about 50."

In close connection with the devotional meetings and Bible classes in commercial houses, a form of effort was adopted, by which members could make themselves felt as they went about their daily occupation. One of the powerful means of winning young men used from the beginning was personal interviews between Christian young men and their companions on the subject of personal religion. We have already seen that this was the almost daily habit of George Williams, from whom the inspiration came. It was urged again and again as the highest form of activity of the Association. Another method was a kind, sympathetic personal pleading at the close of a meeting or Bible class with any unconverted young man who might be willing to remain for a few moments' conversation. In the next period this developed into the "after meeting," following the prayer meeting and Bible class, to which young men

seeking to become Christians were invited. The First Annual Report read in November, 1845, gives an account of this work in one of the commercial houses. "I may mention as one of the best results of our connection with the Young Men's Christian Association, the formation among us of a society, the members of which each take a young man in the establishment as an especial object of his care, to seek by Christian persuasion and the influence of companionship to induce him to attend church and prayer meeting, and by speaking to him and praying for him to bring him, through God's blessing, to the cross of Christ."

In the report with which "the formative period" of the London work closes occurs an illustration of the way members dealt personally with young men. One writes (p. 21): "Two members of your Association kindly asked me to attend the meetings, where I derived much benefit; but I found more from being called aside by them after one meeting, when they persuaded me to give up my sin and turn to Him who has said, 'Whosoever believeth on Christ shall not perish but have everlasting life.' They kindly prayed with me, and through these means I was led to see the folly of my sin and became accepted of God."

The Fourth Annual Report, in commenting on the personal work of members, says: "That the members of the Association have in their daily callings influenced over 6,000 young men."

In December of 1846, the Association headquarters presented a busy scene. A prominent minister had consented to prepare a special address to young men, which was to be published in a neat, attractive little volume. The members of the Association secured the names of ten thousand young men in London. A copy of this address was done up carefully, directed, and on New Year's Day, January 1, 1847, presented to each of

these ten thousand young men. "The novelty of these addresses, their free bestowment, and the circumstance of their being enclosed personally to individuals, rendered them generally very acceptable, and in several cases the Committee were made aware of their usefulness."<sup>9</sup>

The Annual Report for 1849 says: "In the great majority of instances they were received with no less good feeling than astonishment." This wide distribution of New Year's addresses on such subjects as "Real Joy," "The Young Men's Christian Year," "Papers to Young Men," was continued for four years and was a characteristic feature of this period. Of a similar nature was the extensive circulation of "tracts" and small leaflets, filled with pithy statements of the way of salvation. A special effort was made for a wide distribution of readable Christian literature upon the occasion with which this first period of the London Young Men's Christian Association closes the first "World's Fair" held in London, 1851. This exhibition brought thousands of strangers from all over the world to London, and the Young Men's Christian Association made a special effort to present the Gospel to young men who attended from British and foreign lands. The meetings and lectures arranged failed to attract large audiences, owing to the season of the year, and the excitement attendant upon the exhibition, but the distribution of literature proved very successful. London was divided into six districts, and two members of the Association assigned to each district. Every Sunday during the exhibition these districts were canvassed and tracts given to all young men with whom the members came in contact. In this way three hundred and fifty-two thousand direct and affectionate statements of the Gospel were presented to young men from almost every

<sup>9</sup> Shipton, "History of the London Association," p. 40.

town and city of Great Britain; each leaflet had also a statement about the Association, with an invitation to visit its rooms. Those little leaflets, as the reports show, not only resulted in the conversion of many young men, but even in the founding of young men's meetings in distant cities.

The Association had now become a recognized spiritual power. It had demonstrated that consecrated young men compactly organized were a mighty force in winning their fellows to become Christians. It is, of course, impossible to measure results of a spiritual character in figures, even if they could be secured.

The Association was plainly successful in carrying out its aim. At the first public gathering in Radley's Hotel, twenty-three young men are reported as having been brought to Christ; at the second meeting, held in March, 1845, one writer says: "It gives us joy to know that six in our house who at our last 'tea meeting' (November 8, 1844,) were strangers to God, and without hope in the world, are now happy in the consciousness of being reconciled to Him." The Fourth Annual Report (1848) says: "The most affecting fact is the conversion of fifty immortal souls during the year. Almost the whole of this number have been received into membership and communion with different branches of the Church." The Fifth Report for the year 1849 states: "During this year we have received evidence that upwards of ninety young men have confessed themselves indebted to the instrumentality of this Association for their experience of the force and power of the Gospel. The large majority of these have been received into communion with the various Christian churches. Your Committee rejoices in the evidence which is furnished by this fact, as well as in almost every letter cited in their report, that the labors of the

Association are in every way auxiliary to the churches of the Lord Jesus Christ."

The first seven years resulted in intensifying the spiritual aims of the Association. It became clearly understood that its chief object was the winning to Jesus Christ of young men. In these seven years, hundreds, perhaps reaching to thousands, of young men in London were converted. Large numbers of Christians were encouraged and led to become workers, while many more young men, probably one hundred thousand, had the Gospel presented to them individually. The Association had gained experience, and now had definitely settled upon five lines of direct spiritual work :

- (1) Devotional meetings for prayer and fellowship, especially for members.
- (2) Bible classes for both unconverted young men and young Christians.
- (3) Religious services in houses of business.
- (4) Personal work.
- (5) The distribution of tracts and Christian literature.

#### INTELLECTUAL WORK.

While the Association was still a germ in the Hitchcock business establishment, the "Mutual Improvement Society" became a part of its work. In this step was involved the whole principle for which the Association stands in its indirect work for young men. The supreme aim of the Young Men's Christian Association has ever been the extension of Christ's Kingdom. The striking sociological fact already discussed is that in carrying out this purpose it has become a powerful agency for developing young men, intellectually, socially and physically. It has been led to seek the symmetrical development of the whole man. The first step



was the establishment of a course of popular lectures. These were open to the general public and were successful from the start. As many as 1,400 persons were present at single lectures given during the first winter. Leading ministers of all denominations, statesmen, university professors and philanthropists have appeared in this lecture course. It quickly became the lecture platform of London. In the first course of twelve lectures a variety of interesting topics were treated, such as "Monumental Evidences of Christianity," "Ancient Rome and Modern London," "The Extent and the Moral Statistics of the British Empire," "Luther and the Reformation," and "Ancient and Modern Palestine." These lectures were given weekly during a period of twelve weeks, usually beginning about December 1st. "For three years the lectures were delivered in alternate weeks at the Wesleyan Centenary Hall in the city and at a room in the West End of London. The tickets for this course of twelve lectures were sold for a shilling, or two-pence for a single lecture."<sup>10</sup> Young men attended them in large numbers. The lectures were published, and thousands of copies found a ready sale. In 1849, the Committee ventured to rent the large Exeter Hall for this lecture course. The result vindicated the wisdom of this decision. This large audience room, seating from 2,500 to 3,000 people, where Wilberforce had championed the rights of the slave, where the "British and Foreign Bible Society" had held its stirring anniversary, where the "May Meetings" of the myriad religious and benevolent agencies of London and England voiced the needs of a world, where Lord Shaftesbury had pleaded the cause of the oppressed, and where many a devoted missionary has bidden farewell to England as he set his face

<sup>10</sup> Stevenson's "Young Men's Christian Association," London, 1884, p. 41.

to the foreign field; this consecrated hall opening on the crowded Strand, destined in later years to become the home of the Association, became after 1849 the platform of its winter lecture courses, which were called the "Exeter Hall Lectures." The Association was a pioneer in the lecture field; it has exerted a great influence.

As new Associations have been formed they have followed the example of the parent Association, until to-day thousands of lectures are delivered annually from the platform of Young Men's Christian Associations. In the Report for 1851, the close of the "Formative Period" of the London work, the Committee said (p. 10): "When we commenced this form of effort it was an experiment of such interest as to involve decided public influences in its success. This result may be seen in the stimulant to similar effort which has been widely diffused, and in the greatly improved tone and tendency of public lectures generally. The fact that in connection with the Association alone there have been above 120 lectures for young men during the past year, suggests an idea of the extent to which this agency has already been multiplied. Of the lectures delivered in London, above half a million copies have been circulated, and who shall tell the work which they have silently done; the fibre and muscle of character which in God's hands they may have supplied to thousands. The lectures were of a decidedly Protestant character and of a high moral tone."

The Report for 1849 says (p. 10): "In very many instances young men are drawn to the Hall who are unaccustomed to attend the ordinary means of spiritual instruction. In others, the lectures prove a direct means of religious awakening, and in others the first step to the churches." "In one instance, the mind of an interesting young man was opened to apprehend God's way

of salvation, who has since entered one of the universities, with a view to prepare himself for the sacred work of the ministry." In the Report for 1850, a young man writes: "It will, I know, be gratifying to you to hear that the first awakening of my soul to its true state was consequent upon attending the last course of lectures given at Exeter Hall."

How directly what are called the "secular agencies" began from the first to minister to the main purpose of the Association is seen from these and other testimonies in the report. Here was a new thought, a discovery of great moment. It was found that certain agencies usually regarded as secular, under Christian administration, might be used to win men to a religious life. The development of this idea grew with the Association.

It belongs to the fundamental idea that religion aims to save the whole man, and whatever helps to make him a better man in body, mind or spirit, lifts him to a higher life.

The opening of the library and reading room, October 1, 1848, has already been alluded to. This was an additional recognition of the intellectual needs of young men. The Report for 1850 says: "The Committee are thankful to record that the experience of the past year has fully realized the anticipations by which they were led to open the library and reading room in Gresham Street. Five hundred young men have availed themselves of the privileges it affords, and many have been led in consequence to attend the religious meetings of the Association. Classes are in operation in French, German, Hebrew and Greek languages, mathematics, arithmetic and book-keeping, in history and essay writing, and for the practice of Psalmody. Arrangements have been made for the delivery of a lecture course at the rooms of the Association every alternate week, save

during the winter session at Exeter Hall." By June, 1849, the number of volumes in the library had reached one thousand. By 1851, the number of young men using the advantages of the library numbered 650, of whom 425 were "associates." Mr. Shipton, who took charge as Secretary, near the close of 1850, writes: "In accordance with the desire and expectation of the Committee, many of those who have attended the library and reading rooms have also frequented the Bible class and devotional meeting, and have entered upon the profession of their faith in the Gospel there illustrated and proclaimed. Very many thus brought within the influence of the Association would not otherwise have been reached."<sup>1</sup>

In 1853, speaking at a public meeting of the friends of the Association, Mr. Samuel Morley said: "The great attraction of the Young Men's Christian Association, to my own mind, has been this,—that it has presented us a platform on which various kinds of agencies may be brought to bear for the benefit of young men. I need scarcely say that we believe in the cultivation of the spiritual life in young men, and that there is provided here a large arrangement of Bible classes and other forms of religious teaching, from which I am quite sure that great benefit has been derived. But no one acquainted with the life of a young man in London can be ignorant of the fact that he is surrounded with temptations of the most horrible kind, leading young men into habits by which hundreds die off every year from pure physical ruin, and it has been to me a source of great satisfaction to have opportunity for offering in plain and distinct language advice to young men on the ruinous tendency of such conduct."

<sup>1</sup> Shipton's History of the Young Men's Christian Association, Exeter Hall Lectures, Vol. I., 1855.

THE SOCIAL WORK.

The very name "Association of Young Men" suggests companionship, and it is not surprising that the leaders early recognized the need of a resort for young men under elevating influences. One of the objects in organizing the Sunday afternoon Bible class was to give young men an opportunity to meet together under wholesome influences, instead of wasting the Sabbath in idleness or sin. Mr. Shipton stated it thus: "It was an endeavor to provide a resort for steady youths without homes, and by kindly, social intercourse to pave the way for the influence of public worship."

The conception, however, of the Association as a resort, open day and night, frequented by young men, in order to draw them away from temptation, did not really take shape until the opening of the rooms in Gresham Street, in October, 1848. Here the sociological fact that young men can be influenced by changing their environment began to find expression. Within a year, four hundred young men who were not Christians were led to frequent these attractive rooms, take advantage of the reading room, library, and educational classes, and mingle with the Christian young men who were members of the society. In order to keep these young men more continually under this influence, a restaurant was opened in the Gresham Street apartments, between 5 and 10 in the evening, so that young men for a reasonable price could get their evening tea at the rooms, and opportunity be afforded them to spend the evening in the wholesome surroundings of the Association.

"Occasional Paper," No. 1, says: "We desire by these means to present some counter attraction to the places of social and convivial resort open to young men after the hours of business" (p. 6).

The Annual Report for 1852 states: "None can really know the isolation and discomfort of young men's lodgings without perceiving that they are necessarily exposed to terrible temptation. Many have confessed that our rooms, with the quiet retirement and intelligent companionship they afford, have been among the greatest blessings they enjoy." The rooms were the office of the "Agent" of the Association, and many instances are recorded of the opportunity thus afforded of personal interviews with young men, who were led by him to become Christians. Since the year 1848, the Young Men's Christian Association has exercised a mighty influence as a social resort.

This feature of Association activity was destined to be more fully developed in America, but it originated with the parent Association at London. The London organization in Gresham Street had become in 1851 a well-defined institution, seeking to provide for the spiritual, intellectual and social needs of young men.

## SEC. II.—FINANCIAL HISTORY.

The early Association movement cannot be appreciated without a knowledge of its financial policy. There is no brighter page in the history of the church than the financial progress of this work for young men during the last fifty years. The self-denying love on the part of young men struggling to get a footing in the world; the noble devotion of Christian business men; the unfaltering persistence and apostolic faith of finance committees, who have accepted the part assigned to them as an important trust, have marked the Association's financial history from its foundation.

Sixpence was the humble fee charged for admission at first, with a similar amount due quarterly. At the first half-yearly tea given at Radley's Hotel in November, 1844, the Committee stated what has been the finan-



cial policy of the organization ever since. "The Committee begs leave to remark that though this sum (sixpence per quarter) will be insufficient to defray current expenses, yet it has been considered advisable to place so low a sum as a quarterly subscription, relying on the spontaneous liberality of members and friends, for the additional expense of the work."

Following this gathering, steps were at once undertaken to secure 130 pounds as the salary for the superintendent of the Association. The Committee established a precedent which became a principle with the organization: On the ground that a young man was of greater service to his employer for being a Christian man, they invited merchants, and others, who employed young men, to contribute to the Association. By January, 1845, the sum of 70 pounds had been contributed by the young men themselves, and business men interested in the work. In 1845, Mr. Geo. Hitchcock accepted the position of treasurer. This was an important advance and bears a vital relation to the growth of the Association. The early financial history of the organization is bound up with the life of this man. He had already contributed more largely than any one else toward the fund to secure a missionary. His first act as treasurer was, at his own expense, to equip and rent suitable rooms for the Association in Sergeant's Inn. The receipts of the Association for 1846 were 287 pounds; the disbursements 372 pounds; the balance, 85 pounds, was loaned to the Association by Mr. Hitchcock. The membership dues at the close of the second year were abolished, and the Association was supported entirely by voluntary contributions, but all young men, whether members or associates, habitually using the library, reading room, and other privileges of the Association, paid an annual fee of ten shillings. In addition to these dues many young men made contributions from

their small incomes, which showed their devotion to the work. The year 1845-1846, Geo. Williams and Mr. Durrant, both of the original Committee of twelve, gave two pounds each. Two other young men gave one pound, one shilling each. Five gave 10 shillings each. The third year the debt of 85 pounds and the expenses, a total of 600 pounds, were all paid, leaving a balance of eight pounds in the treasury.

The fourth year the expenses were 608 pounds. The expenses of the next year were very large, owing to occupying and equipping of the Gresham Street rooms. By a vigorous effort over 2,100 pounds were raised and expended upon the year's work for 1849. The apartments thus provided with parlors, secretary's rooms, library and educational class-rooms laid the foundation for future work. Annual subscriptions are reported of 25, 20, and 15 pounds each. Mr. Bevan, the president, gave 41 pounds, and Mr. Geo. Hitchcock made the generous donation of 161 pounds and five shillings. Mr. Geo. Williams showed his devotion by giving what must have been a sacrifice at the time, the sum of 25 pounds toward the new equipment. The expenditures for 1850 were 2,080 pounds, with a balance in the treasury of 56 pounds. The Association was now undertaking an extensive work. Its varied agencies required large amounts of money. The great exhibition was close at hand and the Committee determined to take advantage of the opportunity this would afford, to preach the Gospel to large throngs of young men who would crowd the capital. To do this required increased means. Mr. Geo. Hitchcock enlarged his contribution to the liberal sum of 350 pounds; besides giving 150 pounds toward equipping the rooms opened by the branch in the West End. The expenses for the year were 3,438 pounds, all but 30 pounds of which were raised during the year. The records frequently make mention of Mr. Hitchcock's

benevolence. The report for 1849 says: "The Committee would hereby thankfully acknowledge the increased obligation of the Association for the magnificent and kind assistance which, in a variety of ways, has been rendered by their respected and beloved treasurer, Mr. George Hitchcock."

SEC. 12.—EXTENSION OF THE ASSOCIATION.—1845-51.

Life manifests itself by growth; it also manifests itself by reproduction. The Young Men's Christian Associations began to multiply. The young men who formed the first organization had in view first the employees in one commercial establishment, then the young men of the commercial classes of London, then at their first "tea meeting" in 1844, at the suggestion of Mr. Owen, the idea was seized upon of making an effort for all the young men of London, and if possible reaching out to other cities of the United Kingdom. The aim of the leaders grew rapidly. Their hearts beat in sympathy with the tempted young men walking the city streets of commercial England. Their plans leaped forth to reach all young men, even while they were struggling to solve the problems of a new organization at home.

The first move of the Association, as we have learned, was to open a headquarters in a coffee house at Ludgate Hill. Not satisfied with this effort, before the Association was nine months old, a branch Association was formed in the West End of London, with a fortnightly meeting held in a Sunday-school room in Swallow Street. This branch, by March 6th, 1845, numbered fifty members. For the first three years, half of the lectures were carried on in this section of the city. When Mr. Tarlton became secretary, early in 1845, efforts were immediately undertaken to establish branch Associations in different parts of London, and before the end of the second year, branches had been formed at four new

points, so that in November, 1846, 18 months after the organization in the Hitchcock establishment, including the original central or city Association, and the branch at the West End, there were six Associations in London. The relation of these branches, as they were called, to the parent Association, was a perfectly voluntary one. The constitution of the London "City" Association was amended so as to read, "Associations which are willing to unite with this society, being similar in their constitution and object, and adopting the spirit of the second, third, eighth and ninth rules of the Association, shall be recognized as in connection with and by mutual consent termed branches of the Young Men's Christian Association" (2d Report).

The rules specified refer:

To the object of the Association, the spiritual and mental improvement of young men, by any means in accordance with the Scriptures. To the management of the organization, by a committee elected by the membership, and to the membership, which must consist of young men who give decided evidence of conversion to God.

These were the three points which the Committee deemed the essential basis for fellowship with other Associations. They are of especial interest as showing the features which were regarded as the chief essentials of the new movement by its founders. Each branch filed a copy of its constitution with the parent body; sent it an annual report, abstracts of which were printed in the report of the central work. By vote of the Central Committee, members of branches were considered "members of the Young Men's Christian Association." Thus a member was recognized as belonging not to his own local branch alone, but to the whole movement.

But London did not bound the horizon of these young men. The report read in March, 1845, at the second

“tea gathering” at Radley’s Hotel, echoes the resolution passed in November of the year before, when it was resolved to employ a missionary to work among the young men of London. This March report says: “Nor would we confine ourselves to the metropolis, but through the medium of our missionaries, extend ourselves and form similar Associations in all the large towns and cities of the Kingdom.”

The industrial changes of the century had made England a nation of cities. The same conditions, modified somewhat but in the main the same as in London, prevailed in all the cities of the Kingdom. Industrial England was full of young men away from home, without home comforts, without opportunities for social, intellectual or spiritual improvement, tempted, irreligious, in the midst of the rush of city life.

The same awful need prevailed, and with it too, in nearly every city, a small group of young men were found who were loyal to Jesus Christ. It was only necessary for a knowledge of the London movement to spread for it to take root and become a national endeavor. In accordance with the policy already mentioned, in 1846, probably in April or May, deputations from London, consisting of members of the Association, generally with Mr. Tarlton as their leader, visited Manchester, Liverpool, Taunton, Exeter, and Leeds, and organized in each of these cities the nucleus of a Young Men’s Christian Association on the London model. The movement had been metropolitan, it now became national. The following year, 1847, Associations were organized in Hull, Oxford, Derby, and Bath. These were followed by others, which have become, as the years passed, centers of influence in every city of the United Kingdom. In 1848, Associations at Sheffield, Bristol, and Reading were added to the list. These Associations varied in strength and vitality, in proportion to the zeal and



genius of the Christian young men of the various communities, but on the whole they were remarkably successful. Earnest men perceived that the Association had grasped a valuable idea, and encouraged the young men to carry it out. These various societies adopted rules similar to the London constitution, filed them with the parent Association to which they sent reports for the London annual meeting, in the same way as the metropolitan branches. They were called, in contrast, Provincial Branches. By the end of the formative period of the British work (1851), Associations had been formed at eight points in London, including the original organization, and in sixteen different cities in England, Scotland, and Ireland.

The same conditions of membership prevail in all: "Members must be young men who give decided evidence of conversion to God." Since 1848, young men of good moral character, by the payment of a small fee, were allowed to become "associates," with the privilege of enjoying all the benefits of the Association, but were not allowed to vote or hold office. The membership of the "City Association," as the original Association was called, from its location in that part of the metropolis called the "City," shows a steady growth. Twelve young men organized the Association in June, 1844; their number had increased by November, to 70; in March, 1845, to 160; in November, 1846, to 200. After this year, the report is given for the entire metropolitan district. In 1847, the number of members in London was 380; in 1848, the membership was 480; in 1849, it numbered 600; this includes the "associates," who were admitted to the privileges of the Association. The membership for 1850 has not been recorded, but at the close of this period the membership of the Central Association alone numbers 425 "associates" and 225 "members," a total of 650, and there were probably



1,400 members and associates indented with the movement in Metropolitan London.

It is difficult to learn definitely of the membership of the Provincial Branches. In November, 1849, the number had reached 520 outside of London. The Association continued to increase both in number of organizations and membership until by the end of 1851 the eight London societies and the 16 Provincial branches, in all 24 Associations, enrolled some 2,700 young men. By 1858, the total membership of the United Kingdom had reached 8,500 "members" and "associates" in 47 Associations.

### SEC. 13.—SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS FROM 1844-1851.

Speaking before the Association in 1853, Mr. George Hitchcock, who was intimately acquainted with its work, said: "This institution I have always regarded with the deepest sympathy. I remember what London was when I was a young man, and the contrast now is striking. Twenty-seven years ago I came to London, and for some time after that it might be said of the young men in London in the shops and warehouses, 'No man cared for their souls, or their bodies either.' Young men in the large houses, for they were worse than the small ones, were herded together ten to fifteen in a room at night. They were literally driven from the shops to their beds, and from their beds to the shop, by a person called a shopwalker. There was no sitting room, no social comfort, no library; they remained until they were taken ill, then they were discharged at a moment's notice; away they went, many of them to the workhouse, and numbers of them used to die prematurely. But now what a change has taken place, and principally through this Association and that admirable institution, 'The Early Closing Association.' I rejoice to say that the hours of business are much shortened, and we know

that there is a very general feeling that there is something more to be done than laboring with the hands, 'that we go forth to our labor until the evening,' and that then is the time for mental improvement and for social duties and privileges." In seven years, the Association had revolutionized public sentiment regarding the claims of young men. It had been one of the chief factors in shortening the hours of labor for commercial young men. It had influenced directly or indirectly tens of thousands of young men, and led many hundreds to become followers of Jesus Christ, and to become members of his church.

## CHAPTER III.

### THE AMERICAN MOVEMENT.

#### SEC. 14.—PREPARATION IN THE AMERICAN CHURCH.— 1800-1851.

We are to turn our eyes to a new theatre of action, a land which, while it has received from Europe its population, and its political, social, and religious ideas, has nevertheless developed a decided individuality of its own. It is in America that the Young Men's Christian Association has achieved its greatest success. The World's Committee, in the report made at the London conference in 1894, said: "The Associations of the United States and Canada present the picture of a powerful, active, and complete organization. They are well at the head of our whole work, and their influence is felt far beyond the American Continent."<sup>2</sup>

We must study briefly the development of the religious forces of America, and the industrial situation, in order to understand the American movement. The distinguishing characteristic of American Christianity is the freedom of the Church from the State. So long has this been the accepted policy that the subject in America scarcely excites a passing interest, and yet it is the great contribution of America to the history of Christianity. The Declaration of American Independence introduced an entirely new chapter in the history of the Church. Europe, with its piled ecclesiastical traditions, lay many miles across the sea. For the first time since the days

<sup>2</sup> "Fifty Years' Work Among Young Men," page 11, English Edition; Exeter Hall, London, 1894.

of Constantine the Church was free to develop among a great people, unfettered by union with the government, and this time it was to be a free Church, protected in its functions, not persecuted by a hostile, civil power. The history of the American Church previous to the introduction of the Young Men's Christian Association in 1851 falls into three periods: (1) The Colonial Period, 1607 to 1776. (2) The Period of Reorganization, 1776 to 1815. (3) The Period of Rapid Extension throughout the growing Republic, 1815 to 1851. It is necessary to trace briefly the events which are of vital importance to our subject.

#### THE FOUNDING OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH DURING THE COLONIAL PERIOD.

Europe has furnished the elements from which the American Church has developed, but the chronological order of their introduction into the United States has been reversed. An analysis with reference to the European origin of the religious forces of the United States shows that they spring from four sources: The Old Roman Church; The Reformation; The Puritan and the Wesleyan Revivals. The Roman Catholic Church owes its present strength to recent immigration from Ireland and Europe. It was not a moulding force in the founding of the nation, except in one colony.

The second element of American Christianity continues directly the Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth century. The two churches which stand directly for the Reformation are the Episcopal and the Lutheran. The Lutheran, and the kindred German bodies, like the Roman Church, owe their present strength to more recent immigrations. The Episcopal Church, however, was the first introduced into America, and has had a continuous history since the founding of the Jamestown Colony in 1607. For a century, the Church of England

was the dominant religion in the South. While the spirit of loyalty to the British Crown prevailed, the Anglican Church nourished the religious life of Virginia and the Southern Colonies as well as the isolated character of the wilderness would permit. But the Church was poorly organized, and the sentiment against an establishment of religion early developed. The American Church had no Bishop, but was in close connection with the English establishment under the direction of the Bishops of London. This led it to be regarded as an ally of the British government. The annals previous to the Revolution are full of struggles between the people and the rectors over their salaries, which were raised by taxation.

At the close of the colonial period, the Episcopal Church was in a reduced condition. It had some following in Connecticut and New York, but only three mission stations in Pennsylvania. Outside of Virginia and Maryland, it was supported as a mission under the British Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. "In the South, there had been a distinct retrogression. Even in faithful old Virginia dissenters were two to one. The result of the fatal breach between clergy and people had already appeared. Church buildings were falling into neglect; many of the clergy had withdrawn, \* \* \* while further south the condition was no better."<sup>3</sup> The Episcopal Church was still further shattered by the Revolution. At the outbreak of the war, there were only 90 clergymen in Virginia, and at its close there were 28; in 1812, only 13 could be rallied to attend the first convention.<sup>4</sup> The Church was also weakened by being wantonly deprived of its endowments by disestablishment. It was not until about 1835 that the Episcopal Church became again

<sup>3</sup> McConnell's History of the American Episcopal Church, p. 182.

<sup>4</sup> McConnell's History of the American Episcopal Church, p. 288.

a vigorous factor in the religious life of the United States. It was one of the chief forces in introducing the Young Men's Christian Association, and produced the leader of the American movement during the first period of its history.

The third and chief source from which America drew her religious life was the great Puritan movement of the 17th century. The lineal descendants of this Puritan revival are the Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The Baptists, who were also earnest in advocating separation between the civil and religious powers, and the doctrine that the Church should be composed only of believers, as a movement among English-speaking people, date their origin from the same period as the Puritans. They accepted the Westminster confession with modifications of the statements regarding baptism and the sacraments. In Virginia they were especially active in the movement led by Thomas Jefferson against the Establishment. They were represented in all sections of the Union. The Presbyterians were especially strong in New York and Pennsylvania. The type of piety, the conception of the Bible, of education, of freedom of conscience, of the Sabbath, of sin, of the relation of the Church to the State, which prevailed at the founding of the nation, were the outgrowth of the Puritan movement of the seventeenth century.

The fourth division of the American Church has come from the impulse to spiritual life given by the Wesleyan revival in Great Britain during the 18th century. America has seen the greatest successes of Methodism. No other denomination has made such rapid progress, or shown more zeal for the elevation and enlightenment of the masses of the people. But this body of Christians who were to become the leading division of American Protestants were hardly a determining factor at the beginning of the nation's history. The teachings



of Wesley produced a deep impression in the colonies, but Methodism was not yet an organized force. The first meeting-house of logs was built in the woods of Maryland in 1764,<sup>5</sup> and in 1773 the converts to Methodism numbered only 1,160. Fifteen years later, in 1784, the Methodist Church was episcopally organized with 14,983 members, four-fifths of whom were in Maryland. With the founding of the new republic, the Methodist Church set out on its great mission.

I have given this brief summary of the early origin of the American Church because this division of the people, among so many of the ecclesiastical organizations, was the determining factor at the beginning of the next period in freeing the Church from union with the government.

The second characteristic of the colonial period was the "Great Awakening," under the leadership of Jonathan Edwards and George Whitfield, which stirred the entire nation. Beginning under the preaching of Edwards at Northampton, Mass., in 1734, the revival spread south with wonderful power, till it reached Georgia, where Whitfield was engaged in establishing an Orphanage, with funds gathered mostly in England. Under the impulse of his marvellous eloquence and devotion, the revival received new vigor. He traveled north, preaching and exhorting in all the colonies. This movement, commonly known as the "Great Awakening," lasted until the Revolution, and even longer. It is of great importance to our subject, because to it can be traced one of the leading characteristics of American Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Without much regard to Calvinistic or Arminian conception of theology, the "Great Awakening" agreed with John Wesley in teaching the possibility

<sup>5</sup> McTyiere's "History of Methodism," p. 253.

<sup>6</sup> McConnell's History of American Episcopal Church, pp. 136-146; Fisher's History of the Christian Church, pp. 524-527.

of the immediate conversion of sinners, and that a Christian may know at once, by an inner experience, that he is accepted of God. It may be called the counterpart of the Wesleyan revival on the west side of the Atlantic. This conception of conversion became characteristic of American Christianity. It has developed the evangelistic and missionary spirit, which is one of the leading features of the American Church, and which was a necessary preparation for the Young Men's Christian Association. The Association in America is an evangelistic agency which aims to win young men to yield their lives to Jesus Christ. The "Great Awakening" prepared the American Church to welcome and support such an enterprise. It was this great revival which fortified the Church to meet the tide of irreligion and immorality which came with the Revolution and the opening years of the republic. The two features of the colonial period which are of importance to our theme were the founding of the different denominations, and the development of the evangelistic spirit by the "Great Awakening."

#### THE PERIOD OF REORGANIZATION, 1776-1815.

War has often ushered in a decline in spiritual life. This was sadly true in America. The second period of American history is marked by irreligion and infidelity almost as pronounced as that which prevailed in Europe. The rigid standard of morals of the early Puritans degenerated. Party strife was as bitter as in the declining days of Greece or Poland. Slavery was growing in the South, "drunkenness threatened to debauch the nation." "In the Western States whiskey was the only currency used. In 1814, there were 1,400 distilleries in the country, producing two and a half gallons of raw spirits annually for every person in the pop-

ulation.”<sup>7</sup> The days of Christianity were thought to be numbered, and the “Age of Reason” to be at hand. Political alliance and sympathy with France brought in infidelity, and associated the ideas of liberty, equality, and free institutions with unbelief and irreligion. There was danger that the Church, the great conservator of self-mastery in the individual, would be paralyzed at just the moment when the inauguration of free institutions demanded self-poise and self-control in the mass of the people.

The leading event in the history of the Church at this period was the culmination of the movement which had been developing for a century in favor of the separation of the civil and religious powers. This sentiment had grown with the growth of republican ideas. The irreligion of the day allied itself to the anti-establishment party in demanding the separation of the Church from the State. The anti-establishment movement succeeded in Virginia in 1784. The leading factor, however, in accomplishing separation, was not irreligion, but the division of the population among so many different denominations. “The convention of patriots, who framed the Federal Constitution at Philadelphia in 1787, were sacredly bound by every consideration of justice and regard to the rights of the various States and religious parties represented by them, to proclaim liberty of religion and its public exercise. This could not be done without a complete separation of Church and State.”<sup>8</sup>

The separation of the Church from the State has developed several features of American religious life that are of great importance to our subject. The independence of the Church involved self-support, self-government, and the organization of the Church as a body of

<sup>7</sup> McConnell's *History of American Episcopal Church*, p. 279.

<sup>8</sup> Elliotts' *Debate*, Vol. III., p. 330, quoted by Philip Schaff, *Evangelical Alliance Report for 1857*, p. 569.

believers, distinct from unbelievers. It is impossible to adequately discuss here the influence which these principles had upon American Christianity as it has developed during the succeeding seventy-five years. The first result during the period of reorganization was the awakening of laymen to activity in Christian work. Self-government, and, above all, self-support, compelled the Church to lean more and more upon laymen in fulfilling her mission. The means for the support of religion, and the advancement of all religious enterprises were no longer raised by taxation, but the Church now rested on the loyalty of its members. This system of voluntary support has been eminently successful. To this training is due the benevolence and generous giving in America which has often attracted the attention of Europeans. Art galleries, universities, and churches are built and maintained, not by the State or royalty, but by private munificence or general contributions. A variety of influences have contributed to increase lay activity in Christian work during this century all over the Protestant world. This century has been characterized by the establishment of lay agencies for extending the Kingdom of Christ. From the German Inner Mission and the myriad organized agencies of Great Britain to the wonderful lay societies of America, the layman is a recognized religious power. The Young Men's Christian Association is a purely lay organization, and without this awakening of laymen to Christian service would have been an impossibility. Laymen have become a more important factor in the activities of the Church throughout America than in any other land, and this is one of the chief causes for the greater success of the American Young Men's Christian Association.

The separation of the Church from the civil power also involved the organization of the Church as a body

of believers distinct from unbelievers. This was of immense advantage. It limited church membership to converted men, and enabled the Church to fulfill its mission of bearing witness to what it believed to be the truth. The separation of believers from unbelievers greatly stimulated the evangelistic spirit, which was the most precious legacy from the preceding period. In Europe, the basis of church membership is not conversion, and a public profession of faith in Christ but birth and baptism under a Christian government. In America the conditions of fellowship are baptism and a public, profession of faith in Jesus Christ. This separation of the converted from the unconverted has proven a constant reminder to the Church of its evangelistic mission. It has confirmed the evangelistic character of American Christianity.

The second characteristic of this period (1876-1815) was the necessary organization of the churches on the basis of the new relation to the government. The Presbyterians and Baptists had never been connected with the State, and were already organized and ready to push forward and occupy the field as population moved westward. This in a measure explains the rapid development of these two denominations. The Methodists were swift to follow in their footsteps and soon outstripped them both. The Episcopalians and the Congregationalists were slow to accept the new situation, and thus lost this first opportunity for rapid advancement. The Episcopal Church was the first to organize, but it was deprived of its resources by disestablishment, and had to face the hostility of the supposed sympathy of its clergy with the Tory party. The Congregationalists, while popular from their loyal support of the patriot cause, and their influence in moulding the new nation, were hardly organized at all, and were slow to advance as an organization into the growing West, while

they gave the most liberally of all of men and money. As a church, they can hardly be said to have had a national organization previous to the calling of the National Council of 1865.

The third characteristic of this period, which has prevailed during all the succeeding history of the nation, is the systematic efforts of the reorganized churches to establish themselves among the population which moved westward. This movement at first fostered denominational rivalry, but it did much to stimulate evangelistic zeal. It prevented the localizing of denominations, as had been done in the colonial period, and so in the end promoted denominational fellowship and intercourse. There is no section of America, except New England, where the Congregationalists still predominate, where any one denomination so outnumber the others as to justify pretensions to superiority. Tolerance was a natural development of the separation of the Church from the State. The Church emerged from the second period of 40 years fully organized, under the new condition of freedom from government control, able to support itself, a self-governed body of believers, and a witness for Christ in the world. The Church had two marked characteristics which are especially important to our theme. The first was a vigorous evangelistic spirit, the outgrowth of the "Great Awakening," strongly intensified by the organizing of congregations of believers as distinct from the unconverted, and by the missionary effort to evangelize the West. The second was the awakened interest of the laity, and their increased prominence in the affairs of the Church. The American Church in 1815 was a growing power in the midst of a period of irreligion which prevailed widely over war-stricken Protestantism, and in the face of the serious problems of slavery and a rapidly developing nation.



## THE PERIOD OF RAPID EXTENSION.

The period from 1815 to 1851 in the United States was one of tremendous religious activity. The Church arose in its might to make the growing nation Christian, and to perpetuate the Puritan and Wesleyan conception of Christianity. As population moved westward and occupied the vast domain of the Mississippi Valley, the Church and school were founded in every settlement. The powerful stimulus to business enterprise, aroused by the appropriating of a new country, quickened also religious activity. The rapidly accumulated wealth of Christian farmers, merchants, and manufacturers flowed into the coffers of the Church in a way that satisfied everyone of the wisdom of the system of voluntary support. Scores of colleges and theological seminaries were established in both the old and new States. Church buildings were erected in large numbers and of more pretentious and beautiful structure. This period of expansion is seen in all of the denominations. Numbers were added to church membership which year by year has enrolled a greater proportion of the total population. The great external characteristics of the third period are :

The march of the Church westward with the pioneer population.

The great increase in the numbers of the communicants, ministers, church buildings, church organizations, and financial resources.

The entrance of Roman Catholicism on a large scale on the wave of the new European and Irish immigration.

The division of the denominations which had large numbers of communicants in both the North and the South into separate bodies on account of slavery.

The feature of this period of chief interest to our

subject was the formation of the great lay societies of the Church. The different denominations now began to establish, or to render really vigorous, both their own denominational boards and interdenominational organizations.

As early as 1801, the Congregationalists and Presbyterians entered into a "plan of union" for the planting of churches in western New York and Ohio. This developed into the Home Missionary Societies of the two denominations in 1826. Each of the large denominations soon founded agencies for extending their systems into the rapidly growing West. In 1850, there were ten Home Missionary Societies in the United States, which received annual contributions to the amount of \$433,090, and which supported 2,675 missionaries in newly-settled communities.

The foreign missionary movement began toward the close of the previous period by the organization of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810. This was supported at first by several denominations, but gradually came to be the agent of the Congregationalists. It rapidly became the policy for each denomination to have its own Foreign Missionary Society. In 1850, there were 14 Foreign Missionary Societies in the United States, receiving annually \$666,360. In addition to these 24 Home and Foreign Missionary Societies, there were a number of other denominational agencies for the education of young men for the ministry, and for founding Sunday Schools.

The attempt to inaugurate Home and Foreign Mission work on an interdenominational basis, made in 1801 and 1810, failed, partly on account of the nature of the enterprises and partly on account of jealousy between denominations. But with the beginning of the third period, the willingness of Christians of different denominations to unite in carrying on work of a

general character began to increase. In 1816, the American Bible Society was established to circulate the Bible without comment, both at home and in foreign lands. This society received hearty support from Christians of all creeds. In 34 years it had distributed nearly seven million copies of the Bible or New Testaments. In 1850, its annual income was \$284,000.

The American Tract Society, for the circulation of Christian literature, was founded on a similar basis in 1824, and at the end of 26 years was receiving \$308,000 annually for the distribution of Christian literature. One of the greatest of these agencies was the American Sunday School Union in connection with the various churches throughout the nation. This society marvelously stimulated lay activity. Its income in 1850 was \$259,900. In 1850 these three great interdenominational agencies, with several others for similar purposes, according to the report made to the Conference of the Evangelical Alliance held at London in 1851, were receiving over \$850,000 annually in voluntary contributions from Christians of all evangelical churches. In addition to forming these societies, Christians began to unite in a great variety of benevolent enterprises. Anti-slavery and colonization societies, temperance organizations, and union evangelistic service were powerful influences in drawing Christians together. In 1846, with evangelical believers of all lands, the American Church united in forming the Evangelical Alliance, which had for its object the establishment of a bond of union between Protestants of every nation and every tongue.

The rapid development of the Sunday School, which rallied the young people under the instruction of Christian laymen, did much to familiarize laymen with methods of Christian work, and with the value of organized effort. In 1851, there were "2,000,000 of children,

youths and adults in the Sunday Schools of the United States, taught by more than 200,000 teachers, among whom were members of Congress and of State Legislature, judges, laymen, mayors of cities, and other magistrates." <sup>9</sup> The Methodist Church, by its system of "local preachers," did much to promote lay preaching, while the development of the prayer meeting familiarized the whole Church with Christian work by laymen. This organizing of the energy of the lay element of the Church permeated American life with vital Christianity.

The separation of Church and State, the decadence of doctrinal disputes, the absorption in practical effort had wrought mightily to weld American Christianity into one homogeneous whole, which all the rivalry for supremacy, the clashing of interests in new settlements, the bitterness over slavery, and the devotion to traditional watch-words handed down from European struggles of former centuries, could not stifle. A breadth of view and warmth of heart began to permeate American Church life. On the broad platform of the Bible and Tract Societies, the Sunday School Union, and a multitude of benevolent organizations, American Christians met side by side. Union became popular; ministers of different denominations exchanged pulpits, and congregations of different churches united in evangelistic services. The revival spirit, which, under the leadership of Charles Finney, awoke to new life, did much to draw the churches into harmonious relations.

With the increased activity of laymen, the desire for unity grew stronger, year by year, and while party differences still prevailed, often bitterly, the Evangelical Churches of America in 1851 looked upon each other as standing shoulder to shoulder in a common cause. At the close of the third period of American Christianity, when the Young Men's Christian

<sup>9</sup> Report Evangelical Alliance for 1851, p 610.

Association was about to begin its role in America, the religious character and institutions of the new nation had become clearly defined, and the general direction of religious effort determined.

The religious forces were organized into the denominations already mentioned. Their numerical strength may be seen in the following table :

	MINISTERS.		CONGREGATIONS.		COMMUNICANTS.	
	1800	1850	1800	1850	1800	1850
Congregationalists.....		1,687		1,971		197,196
Presbyterians.....	300	4,578	500	5,672	40,000	490,259
Baptists.....		8,018	1,150	13,455	65,000	948,867
Methodists.....		6,000		30,000	40,000	1,250,000
Episcopalians.....	260	1,504	320	1,550	16,000	73,000
German Churches.....		1,827		5,356		333,000
Evangelical.....						
Other Denominations...				300		
Totals.....		23,514		58,304		3,292,322

The two leading groups are (1) the Methodist denomination, which was distributed over the whole nation in some 30,000 different congregations, enrolling 1,250,000 communicants and ministered unto by 9,000 lay preachers, in addition to 6,000 ordained ministers; (2) the Puritan and Baptist group, which sprang from the non-conformist movement in England in the 17th century, represented by the Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Baptists. This second group enrolled some 20,600 churches, under the supervision of 14,200 pastors, with some 1,640,000 members.

In 1850, in a population of 23,225,000 people, American Evangelical Christianity presented the picture of a group of voluntary, self-governing ecclesiastical organi-

zations, which had rallied some 3,300,000 communicants into 58,000 different congregations, scattered broadcast over the new Republic and fostered by the ministrations of some 23,000 preachers of the Gospel. Some indication of the result of self-support may be gathered from the fact that in 1850 the sum of \$7,700,000 was voluntarily contributed for the support of these churches, \$3,000,000 additional for church building, and a sum of \$2,150,000 for the support of the various denominational and inter-denominational societies already mentioned. Resting on this ecclesiastical foundation, laid during the two and a half centuries of its history, American Christianity had developed four characteristics, which were a necessary preparation for the Young Men's Christian Association:

1. Evangelistic zeal which sought to win each individual to personal alliance to Jesus Christ.
2. Lay activity, by means of which laymen had become a great factor in the direct work of preaching the Gospel and in directing the agencies of the Church.
3. A faculty for organization, which had created not only the great national societies, but reached also to the details in the life of the local churches.
4. An increasing spirit of harmony between denominations, which manifested itself in fellowship and in union for specific objects.

Here were the forces to give the impetus to a new movement. Without spiritual power, without practical organizing ability, without a willingness among Christians of different creeds to unite in practical effort, the Young Men's Christian Association could not have been established. Dr. Charles Hase, of Jena, writing at the close of this period (1853), said: "The Puritan and Methodist elements have been especially attracted to America and have become prominent in the national character. The zeal engendered by an earnest Chris-



tianity thrown into powerful conflict with the world has led its friends to an intense use of ordinary and extraordinary means for the conversion of men, and the religious revivals, which have sometimes been witnessed in other lands, have here become frequent."<sup>10</sup>

#### SEC. 15.—THE INDUSTRIAL SITUATION.

We have seen the development of the religious forces in the United States, which were ready to establish and maintain any institution needed to advance the cause of the Gospel. We turn now to look at the actual conditions surrounding the life of young men, which have made the Young Men's Christian Association in America necessary. The occasion is the same as in England: the growth of cities. We have already alluded to the decadence of morality which followed the Revolutionary War. The breaking up of the old relation to England, the expansion to the new West, the intoxication of founding a new government, and the rapid growth of wealth disturbed the self-controlled movement of society. The more settled East never really yielded to laxity of morals. But in the West, while government and order were being established, gambling, drunkenness, licentiousness, robbery and sometimes murder threatened to overturn the new States before they could be formed. The steamboats which plied the great lakes, the Mississippi River and the Ohio, were the haunts of gamblers and thieves, who, while less violent to the person, were as ruthless as the highwayman in the days of Robin Hood.

Slavery in the South, Indian warfare, and the hardly less demoralizing Indian trading in the North, and, with it all, the isolation of pioneer life, stifled the religious aspiration of the people. Young men, then, as to-

<sup>10</sup> "History of the Christian Church," Ch. Hase, translated by C. E. Blumenthal, p. 601, New York, 1886.

day, were the adventurous leaders in the march westward, and faced all the peril to their moral and higher life which these rude surroundings entailed. This advance westward, headed by young men, has continued through all the subsequent history of the United States, until the Rocky Mountains have been crossed, the Pacific coast settled, and the East and West connected with lines of railway. This filling of the West with the young, leaving the older portion of the population in the East, necessarily forced young men to the front and into prominent business, political and social positions. It led society to trust important enterprises to young men, and in a measure accounts for that readiness to lead, and that courage in the face of responsibility often seen in young men in America.

While in Massachusetts and some of the southern States women outnumber men, the West has always had a large majority of men. In the lumber regions of northern Michigan and Wisconsin, it was estimated that in 1887 there were 80,000 more men than women, most of whom were young and unmarried, exposed to all the demoralizing influences of camp and frontier life. The vital statistics of Wyoming, Idaho, Montana and Colorado show the same great preponderance of males. Over 60 per cent. of the immigrants from Europe to America are males, and the large proportion of these are young men.<sup>11</sup> The census for 1890 showed 377,000 married men in America whose families were still in Europe.

The first pioneer march westward was rapidly followed by an agricultural period, in which the forests were felled and the prairies brought under cultivation. In an incredibly short time, the whole region, from the Allegheny Mountains to the Mississippi, assumed a

<sup>11</sup> See article on "The Census of Sex, Marriage and Divorce," in "Forum" for June, 1884, by C. D. Wright.

settled aspect. The canal system was extended to Ohio in 1825. In the year 1829, the railroad was introduced, and the industrial revolution, which began in England with the invention of the steam engine, in 1793, commenced in the United States. All the internal conditions of the United States were completely altered by the railroad and the use of coal in the manufacture of iron introduced in 1837. The period 1830 to 1840 marks the entrance of modern American conditions. At its beginning, the country was an overgrown type of colonial life; at its end, American life had been shifted to entirely new lines, which it has since followed.<sup>1</sup> The Agricultural Period, which closed with 1830, has been followed by an industrial era, in which the cities have grown to contain half the wealth and 18,000,000 people out of a population of 62,000,000 (1890).

It is a striking sociological fact that although the density of population in the United States is only 21 to the square mile (1890), while in France it is 187; in Germany, 221; in England, 498, still the movement from the country to the city has become as pronounced in America as in Europe. The millions of acres of cheap public lands, the homestead privileges, the fact that only one-sixth of the land is under cultivation, did not prevent, between 1880 and 1890, the stagnation or decline of the rural population in over 10,000 out of the 25,700 townships in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

In 1834, McCormick, by the invention of the reaper, began the long list of agricultural inventions which have made it possible for an ever-diminishing proportion of agricultural laborers to feed the cities of the world. These inventions have stimulated the concentration of vast sections of American farm land under single managements, until "one farmer, like Dr. Glyn,

<sup>1</sup> Britannica "History of the United States."

<sup>2</sup> "New Era," Josiah Strong, p. 167.

of California, or Mr. Dalrymple, of Dakota, with a field of wheat covering a hundred square miles, can raise as much grain with 400 farm servants as 5,000 peasant proprietors in France can by old methods." <sup>3</sup>

It is not my purpose to enter into a detailed discussion of the growth of American cities.<sup>4</sup> The facts to be observed are that the same movement of population from the country to the city, found in Europe, obtains in America even to an accelerated degree, that this movement was pronounced in 1851, and that it was *the* occasion for establishing the American Young Men's Christian Association.

In 1790, Philadelphia had 42,000 people; New York, 33,000; Boston, 18,000, and Baltimore, 13,000. By 1830, while the whole population had increased<sup>5</sup> less than fourfold, the city population increased 13-fold and contained 6.3 per cent. of the total population. By 1850, the proportion of the population in cities was already 12½ per cent. out of a total of 23,200,000 people. The increasing power of the city is seen from the place of manufacture in the nation. There were already 120,855 manufacturing establishments, employing 944,100 persons. The manufactured product was estimated at \$1,013,000,000, as compared with a total agricultural product of \$1,600,000,000.<sup>6</sup> The current of population was already flowing from the country to the city in 1851.

The first characteristic of American cities to be noticed is their abnormally large proportion of young men.<sup>7</sup> Young men form an undue proportion of the

<sup>3</sup> Loomis' "Modern Cities," p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> See Josiah Strong's "Our Country," Revised Edition, and "The New Era;" Samuel Loomis' "Modern Cities."

<sup>5</sup> "Our Country," p. 179.

<sup>6</sup> Report of Evangelical Alliance, 1855, p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> See Sec. 7, on British Cities.

army which marches annually from the country and village to the city. Cleveland, out of a population of 149,000 males (1892), had 60,000 young men between the ages of 15 and 36 years,—20 per cent. of the entire population. The general average for the population of the entire country is 14 per cent. (1890 Census). An examination of the reports made by the Young Men's Christian Associations in a large number of American cities, varying from 8,000 to 1,800,000 inhabitants, reveals two interesting and significant sociological laws regarding American young men: 1. A decided tendency on the part of young men to seek a livelihood in the city. 2. That the proportion of young men between the ages of 15 and 35 tends to vary according to the size of the city. The more population is concentrated, still greater is the concentration of young men.<sup>8</sup> From 18 to 20 per cent. of the population of American cities are young men.

The second characteristic is the homeless condition of young men in American cities. City young men may be divided into three classes: foreign young men, strangers, and young men with homes, either of their own, or their parents. In American cities, the foreign element is very large. Immigration from Europe, of a very different character from that which had given a Puritan cast to the free institutions of the republic, began to pour with increasing volume into America. In 1820, it was about 12,000 annually. But soon the famine-stricken inhabitants of Ireland, and the peasants from Germany, Austria and Italy began to invade America. Immigration reached in 1850 as many as 315,000 immigrants in a single year. This current, interrupted to some extent by the Civil War, has brought a vast multitude of newcomers to America. Between 1880 and 1891, 5,240,000 immigrants came to make their

<sup>8</sup> See "Dying at the Tops," Dr. J. W. Clokey, p. 19.

homes in the United States. The cities have proved especially attractive to immigrants from Europe. The percentage of foreign-born inhabitants in the fifty leading American cities was in 1880 eighteen times as great as the percentage of foreign-born persons in London. While less than one-third of Americans are foreign born, or children of parents born in other lands, 62 per cent. of the population of Cincinnati was foreign, in this sense; 83 per cent. of Cleveland; 63 per cent. of Boston; 80 per cent. of New York, and 90 per cent. of Chicago. It is a noticeable fact that a large proportion of the immigrants are young men who have left their fatherland to seek their fortunes in the New World. The cities of America have proved especially attractive to these young men. *Fully fifty per cent. of the young men in American cities are foreign by birth or parentage.* This class of young men are open to especial temptation. Old customs, church relations and traditional ideas of conduct have lessened their hold before these young men have had time to adjust themselves to their surroundings. This has been especially true of members of the Roman Church, thousands of whom have drifted off into indifference and unbelief. This half of the city young men of America are especially impervious to the American agencies for preaching the Gospel, and open to the swarming temptations of the city. Thousands of these foreign young men have no home ties and belong also to the second class of young men who may be called the stranger portion of the city population. The tendency already mentioned of population to move from the rural districts to the city, and the facility with which Americans change residence from one city to another, gives a colonist character to the city population. The resident population of London which is London-born is 63 per cent. of the whole, while Cleveland, which in 1890 had 261,000 people,



twenty years previous had a population of only 72,000. It is impossible to estimate the percentage of city young men who are living away from home, but it is very large. One incident in New York is significant.<sup>9</sup> There, young men who have fallen below the plane of self-respect live in the "Cheap Lodging Houses," where a wretched bed in a crowded room may be had for a small fee. "Nearly all of these lodgers are young men." Inspector Byrnes, of the New York police force, says: "The cheap lodging houses have caused more destitution, more beggary and more crime than any other agency I know of."<sup>10</sup> Mr. Riis, from the reports given by the police authorities, estimates that some 14,000 young men in New York live in these "Cheap Lodging Houses." These are only the young men whose incomes are insufficient to secure more respectable lodgings, and they form but a small percentage of the young men who are strangers in New York City. A very large proportion of the young men in American cities are living away from home influences, in boarding houses and lodgings.

The third class of young men in American cities are those who live with their parents, or in homes of their own. Home, Church and American traditions have a much better opportunity to exert a powerful elevating influence upon this class of young men. They respond to this influence, and are among the most valuable of American citizens. But this class of young men are under an increasing volume of evil influences. The simplicity of colonial and country life is gone. The young man of the city is in the whirl of temptation, the fierce struggle for place and the feverish thirst for pleasure. Whether the young man of the city resides

<sup>9</sup> Riis' "How the Other Half Lives," chapter "The Cheap Lodging House."

<sup>10</sup> "How the Other Half Lives," Riis, p. 82.

with his parents, or be a stranger from a foreign land, or from the country, the influence of home over him is greatly diminished. The young men of American cities are largely a homeless class.

Not only has the home lost much of its hold, but the Evangelical Church has no real grip upon the majority of the young men of American cities.

Scarcely 35 per cent. of the communicants of American Protestant Churches are men; women form the greater proportion of nearly every Protestant communion and congregation. The Congregational Churches of Cleveland enroll 2,200 women and only 1,200 men.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of the communicants and worshipers in the majority of churches who are young men is very small. In a town of 14,000 people in Ohio, in 1890, an examination of the register of the eleven Protestant Churches showed only 297 young men as members,—about 13 per cent. of the young men of that town. Similar tests have been made in six Ohio towns, with a similar result. A careful investigation of the habits of the young men of Cleveland, made by the Young Men's Christian Associations in 1892, shows that out of 60,000 young men, between the ages of 15 and 36, in that city, 6,212, about 10 $\frac{2}{3}$  per cent. were members of Evangelical Churches.<sup>2</sup> Similar investigation has been made by Associations in widely separated sections of America. Whatever conclusion may be drawn as to the moral character of the young men of American cities, it is plain that they are largely withdrawn from the influence of the Evangelical Churches.

One of the chief reasons for this estrangement is the struggle between capital and labor, which involves a large section of city young men. This struggle began

<sup>1</sup> Address, Pres. W. G. Ballantine, 25th Report Ohio Y. M. C. A.

<sup>2</sup> 25th Report Cleveland Y. M. C. A.

with the growth of cities and manufacture. The first city trade union was formed in New York, in 1803.<sup>3</sup> There was a strike among printers, in 1821. The first national labor organization was formed in 1850. By 1860, twenty-six different trades were organized. The cities of America, 66 per cent. of whose population are working men, began to assume the aspect of two organized camps, in which capital and labor stood arrayed against each other. Samuel Loomis says: "The faith on which the nation was founded, and through the strength of which she has endured the shock of war and the stress of stormy times, this faith has almost no place among the working classes." "It is doubtful if one in twenty of the average congregation in our English speaking Protestant city churches fairly belongs to this class."<sup>4</sup> Fully 60 per cent. of the young men of American cities belong to the industrial classes, and share their prejudice against the Church and its agencies. While a large number of the young men of American cities are active workers in the cause of Evangelical religion, both the home and the Church have lost their hold on a majority of the young men of American cities.

The fourth characteristic is the concentration in American cities of the powers of evil. Nowhere else are young men so surrounded by temptation. The fact is too apparent to need discussion. Low theatres, concert halls, liquor saloons, houses of ill-fame, dives, fast clubs, and even hotels, boarding houses and the city streets swarm with temptations, and are the headquarters for an army of depraved men and women who lie in wait to prey upon young men.

The city is without parallel the great center of America's religion, piety and benevolence. The power,

<sup>3</sup> Labor Movement in America, Ely, p. 38.

<sup>4</sup> Modern Cities, p. 82.

leadership, wealth and much of the aggressive zeal of the Church is in the city, but the city is also the headquarters of vice and evil, and it may well be doubted, rapidly as the conserving forces of the city have grown, if they bear as favorable a relation to the powers of evil as they did in 1830, when the American Industrial Era began. This concentration of the forces of evil in American cities is aimed directly at young men who are so largely removed from the influences of both home and Church.

The case is complete: American life had entered upon a new stage. The Industrial Era ushered in the supremacy of the city. These cities began to be crowded with an abnormally large proportion of young men, a small minority of whom were earnest supporters of the Evangelical faith, but the greater majority of whom were beyond the influence of home and the ordinary agencies of the Church, exposed to new and powerful temptations. In this emergency the evangelistic zeal, liberality and energy in the American Church, which has already been described, needed only direction to organize a mighty agency to save young men. This opportunity came with the founding of the Boston Association on the London model, in December, 1851.

#### SEC. 16.—FOUNDING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION, DECEMBER, 1851, TO JUNE, 1854.

The first period of the development of the Young Men's Christian Association on the American continent properly extends from the founding of the Montreal and Boston Associations, in 1851, to the permanent location of the American Committee in New York in 1866. This period of 15 years, in spite of the movement towards unity, and the establishment of a national alliance, in contrast with later development must be called a *period*

*of local effort.* There was no general consciousness of a great national or world-wide movement. The four leading events of this period were :

The founding of the movement under the leadership of Boston and Montreal.

The establishment of the confederation under the leadership of William Chauncy Langdon, of Washington.

The great revival of 1857 to 1860, which, beginning in New York, swept over the whole country, and which, while it almost overwhelmed for a number of years the original definite idea of the distinctive mission of the Association to young men, and made it in many places a general missionary agency to all classes, confirmed forever the evangelistic character of the movement.

The fourth work of this period was the mission to the army and navy during the great Civil War, one of the noblest instances of devotion in the annals of Christianity, and the most brilliant page in the early history of the Association.

This period of fifteen years in the United States and Canada was one of uncertainty and experiment. The mission of the Association was ill-defined in the minds of many of its supporters ; the relation of the Associations to each other and to the Church was undetermined. It was a period of training of leaders and discovery of methods of work, during which the American Association gradually grew into self-consciousness, and in which the Association tradition was being formed. It was a period during which the spiritual power necessary for a great undertaking slowly developed.

On the other hand, this period did not define definitely the aim of the Association as a work for young men by young men. It was clearly recognized as a society of young men, but many of the leaders thought the

efforts of the Association should be directed to preaching the Gospel to all classes of society. In the second place, the relation of the Association to the Church was not defined. There was a strong tendency which ultimately prevailed to limit the control to evangelical Christians, but no definition of an evangelical church was formulated. The Association had not evolved its method of work for the fourfold development of young men, spiritually, intellectually, socially, and physically. It was as yet confined almost wholly to the spiritual and intellectual side of its mission. The American Associations did, however, do much during this period to furnish a wholesome social resort.

In this chapter we are to discuss the work accomplished in America between December, 1851, and August, 1855, the date of the Paris convention. The two events of these five years are the founding of the local Associations, and of the Confederation.

#### THE BOSTON ASSOCIATION.

In America, as in Germany and Great Britain, there had been many efforts to inaugurate special work for young men. It has not been the purpose of this treatise to enter into a discussion of these movements. Cotton Mather speaks of young men's religious societies in the early colonial days in New England. Some of these had a continuous existence covering a long period, one for 150 years.

The Nasmith movement, shortly preceding the founding of the Association, did much to awaken an interest in Christian effort for young men, and in Montreal trained the men who organized the first Association on the American continent.

In the United States, the only society formed previous to 1851 which vitally influenced the Young Men's Christian Association was the "Young Men's Society of



Religious Inquiry," of Cincinnati. In 1848, seven young men in Cincinnati, who were members of the same church, formed themselves into a society "for the purpose of cultivating Christian intercourse; of assisting each other in growth in grace and knowledge, and especially of enlarging their acquaintance with the religious movements of their own country and of the world, and fitting themselves for more extended usefulness in the service of the Divine Redeemer."<sup>5</sup> This society was very soon reorganized on an interdenominational basis, and, in seeking an appropriate way "to extend their influence" in Christian service, wrote a letter to Dr. Samuel Miller, a prominent theologian connected with Princeton University. In replying, Dr. Miller said: "I earnestly advise that your inquiries and benevolent efforts be especially directed to the moral and spiritual benefit of children and young people. He that searches out a child or young person, and especially a young man of amiable and promising character, and secures for him a good literary and religious education, may be said to be doing good in the most solid and permanent form possible.

\* \* \* I believe there is no branch of religious effort more likely to richly remunerate the effort bestowed upon it than searching out the children of the needy and vicious, providing for their moral and religious education, and teaching them to live to God, to their country, and to their own happiness." This letter shaped the activities of the new society, which in a few years enrolled seventy earnest, active young men, who devoted much effort to Christian work. The two objects of their efforts were young men and the children of the poor. In their work for young men they established nicely furnished rooms, with a library, reading room, and parlors, where semi-monthly meetings were

<sup>5</sup> Report First American Convention, 1854, p. 29.

held of a religious and social character. In carrying on the work for children, seven Sunday Schools were established in the more destitute parts of the city, which were managed and taught by members of the "Young Men's Society." This effort at Cincinnati was at first entirely local, but after the introduction of the Young Men's Christian Association, this society identified itself with the Association cause, and with the maturity of experience threw itself into the movement. The influence of the Cincinnati Association was powerful in forming the Confederation, and especially in fostering the spiritual zeal of the American Associations, but not being a movement directed solely toward young men, this society was one of the chief influences in diverting the American Associations from their specific mission. In a few years, however, the Cincinnati Association recognized the wisdom of concentrating its efforts upon work exclusively for young men. It is now an organization of nearly 2,000 members, and has recently erected a building of its own at a cost of \$200,000.

The real founding of the Association in America was in 1851, when the influence of the London idea reached simultaneously Montreal, in Canada, and Boston, the metropolis of New England. We are especially concerned with the Boston movement because it was from Boston the Association has spread over the American continent.

In the winter of 1849-1850, a student from Columbia University, New York, named G. M. Van Derlip, visited Edinburgh University for a course of study. During his stay abroad he spent some time in London, where he became acquainted with the London Young Men's Christian Association. He was so much impressed with the value of this organization that he prepared an extended account of it, which was sent to the *Watchman and Reflector*, of Boston, the organ of the Baptist

denomination. This letter, written in June, 1850, described so vividly the work in London in the seventh year of its history, and was such an important link in extending the movement in America, that a considerable extract must be quoted from it.<sup>6</sup> It was written from London as follows :

"Taking the most direct course from the general post office to the Bank, on the right-hand side of Gresham Street, a large stuccoed building will be observed, on the doors of which is inscribed, 'Young Men's Christian Association.' Ascending the stairway, we enter a spacious apartment some sixty by thirty feet. It is elegantly furnished with mahogany tables, sofas and lounges. Here are to be found the principal newspapers of the Kingdom, together with copies of journals from every part of the world.

"Ascending another flight, we reach a room supplied with all the reviews and magazines. Adjoining it is the library room, in which lectures are occasionally delivered. The library may be called a small one, having less than eight thousand volumes, but size is no criterion of value, for a better selected collection of books—one more completely adapted to the wants of those using it—can scarcely be conceived of.

"In the library room, on Sunday afternoon, a large class of young men meet to study the Word of God. There are other classes of the same kind, under the direction of the Association, meeting in different parts of the city. The graduates of these classes make efficient Sunday School teachers. On the floor above the library are bath rooms, class rooms, etc. Instruction is regularly given to classes in French, German, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. There is also a class in English literature which meets weekly under the supervision of Rev. Charles Stovel.

<sup>6</sup> See *Young Men's Era*, June 14, 1894.

"There is one peculiarity in the arrangement of the Association, and that is the refreshment room. Provision is made for the physical as well as intellectual man. Between the hours of 5 and 8 P. M., servants are in attendance, and members are furnished with tea, coffee, chocolate and other refreshments at cost price, about half the price charged at restaurants. Members can now spend two or three hours in the reading room after business hours before going home.

"I see I have reversed the proper order by describing the 'local habitation' of the Young Men's Christian Association before speaking of the Association itself. It is, comparatively speaking, a new institution. Six years ago it was organized. The Rev. Thomas Binney, in an address delivered at a late meeting of the society, said :

" 'There was a young man (George Williams) in a certain house in London, working away there, aye, and working well; a young man of activity and tact and industry and talent, attending to his business, and being thoroughly in his business when he was in it, and the thought rose up in his mind of getting a few young men, like-minded, together, to read the Scriptures and unite in prayer, and lo, this institution came to be evolved from that one thought.'

"Its religious character is its peculiar glory. There are other associations which accomplish a part of what this proposes, but I know of none in which the attainment of vital piety and manifestation of godliness is the leading object. It is not enough that a man should be religious in the sense often understood. A man has more to do than save himself. Says Frederick Maurice, 'The Kingdom of God begins within, but it is to manifest itself without; it is to penetrate the feelings, habits, thoughts, words, acts of him who is the subject of it.' Believing these things, not a few Christian young men

of London resolved in God's strength to accomplish these objects, viz. :

"The improvement of the spiritual and mental condition of commercial young men by the efforts of the members of the society in the sphere of their daily calling, by devotional meetings, Biblical instruction, mutual improvement classes, and the diffusion of Christian literature. Article 8 of their constitution reads, 'Any person shall be eligible for membership who gives decided evidence of his conversion to God.' Young men of good character may enjoy the privileges of the library and reading room on payment of a small sum. The first three years of its existence there was a struggle. The munificence of George Hitchcock, Esq., kept the society free from debt, yet it was felt that too little was accomplished.

"In 1848, the third annual course of lectures was published, and in a short time 36,000 copies were sold. The attention of the Christian public was at once directed to the Association, and thousands of warm friends enlisted. All the evangelical clergymen of London are its warm friends, and a large proportion of the young men of their congregations members. As might have been expected, a few high churchmen have opposed it openly.

"There are district prayer meetings held regularly in five different parts of London, and numbers of young men trace their conversion to them, and bless God for this Association. There is scarcely a commercial house in London without one or more missionaries among their clerks. Young men from the country come up to London, and many are at once led out of temptation. Instead of snares, they find friends who have provided a delightful place, and a delightful way to spend leisure hours. The young stranger can say no longer, 'No man careth for my soul.' This is best of all. I have

detailed the foregoing facts, fondly hoping that the good example may be followed.      G. N. V."

This letter appeared in the *Watchman and Reflector* in October, 1851, and fell under the eyes of a converted sea captain named J. V. Sullivan, a member of the Baptist Church, who, in his roving life, had realized intensely the temptation to which young men in the thronging streets of modern cities are exposed. The desire of Captain Sullivan was aroused to have a similar work done among the young men of Boston who were being led into lives of sin. Captain Sullivan visited the Association in London, and was so impressed with its work that on his return he began to urge the formation of a similar society.<sup>7</sup> Through his efforts, on December 15th, 1851, "thirty-two men, representing twenty congregations of Boston, met in the vestry of the Central Church to consider the matter."<sup>7a</sup>

Mr. Charles Demon, afterwards to play so noble a part in the work for the Union soldiers, was appointed Chairman, and Henry S. Chase, Secretary. This meeting favored the proposed enterprise, and appointed a committee, of which Captain Sullivan was a member, to prepare a plan of organization. The meeting then adjourned to December 22d, "when they assembled with largely increased numbers in the Old South Chapel, in Spring Lane, to consider the proposed constitution."

For years the struggle between the Orthodox, or Trinitarians, as they were called, and the Unitarian and Universalist party, had been characteristic of the religious life of Boston. The evangelical or orthodox, and the non-evangelical party, both Unitarians and Universalists, had learned to know each other well, and it was

<sup>7</sup> I have been unable to discover whether Capt. Sullivan began agitating for an Association before, or after, the publication of the *Watchman* letter.—[THE AUTHOR.]

<sup>7a</sup> Report Boston Association, 1853, A. M. -21.



a recognized fact that they could not work together for a common end. This was a critical point in the inaugurating of any religious enterprise. It is not surprising that it was almost the first question raised when the constitution came up for adoption before the young men assembled in the chapel of the "Old South Church," on December 22, 1851. The non-evangelical party in the United States was clearly defined and easily recognized. Here was one advantage, at least, of a free church system. Instead of all parties being identified with the State Church, as in Germany, in America, each party forms its own communion. In Boston, at this time, the non-evangelicals were represented by the Unitarian and Universalist Churches; the evangelicals principally by the Episcopalians, Baptists, Congregationalists and Methodists.

The question thus arose in a very clear and definite shape, should members of all six of these denominations be admitted, or only members of the evangelical churches? The question was accentuated by the fact that Boston, of all places in America, was the battle-ground where the conflict between evangelical and non-evangelical belief had been fought out. The non-evangelicals to-day number a mere handful in the United States, scarcely 2 per cent. of American Protestants, but in Boston and vicinity they have some 45,000 members.<sup>8</sup> No one fully realized the profound importance of the step under discussion. The matter was earnestly debated. As yet it was purely an evangelical movement; should the membership be limited to members of these churches? It was the supreme moment for the American movement. After much discussion, the constitution was referred back to the committee, and four young men appointed to secure the advice of the leading

<sup>8</sup> Carroll, "Religious Forces in U. S."

representatives of the four evangelical denominations. The meeting adjourned to meet in the same place, the "Old South Church," December 29, 1851, for final decision. Bishop Eastburn of the Episcopal Church, Dr. Lyman Beecher of the Congregational Church, Dr. Sharp of the Baptist, and the Bishop of the Methodist Church, were interviewed without conference with each other for their opinions. The young men brought the opinions of these leading ministers to the meeting held on December 29th, and it was found they were unanimous in favoring organization on an evangelical basis. The meeting was almost to a man of the same opinion, and the following Constitution was unanimously adopted :

#### PREAMBLE.

"We, the subscribers, led by a strong desire for the promotion of evangelical religion among the young men of this city, and impressed with the importance of concentrated effort, both for our own spiritual welfare and that of those from without, who may be brought under our influence, and desirous of forming an Association in which we may together labor for the accomplishment of the great end proposed, hereby agree to adopt for our united government the following

#### CONSTITUTION.

##### ARTICLE I.

##### *Title and Object.*

The name of this society shall be the "Boston Young Men's Christian Association," and its object the improvement of the spiritual and mental condition of young men.

##### ARTICLE II.

##### *Members.*

SECTION 1. *Active Members.* Any young man who is a member in regular standing of an evangelical church may become an active member of this Association by the payment of one dollar annually. Active members only shall have the right to vote and be eligible to office.

SECTION 2. *Associate Members.* Any young man of good moral character may become a member of this Association by the payment

of one dollar annually, and shall be entitled to all the privileges of the Association, eligibility to office and the right to vote only excepted.

SECTION 3. Related to life members.

#### ARTICLE III.

The officers of this Association shall consist of a President, four Vice-Presidents, Recording Secretary, Corresponding Secretary, Treasurer and Librarian, all of whom shall be elected annually by ballot.

A standing committee, consisting of two members from each evangelical church in the city, shall also be chosen at the annual meeting, who shall appoint twelve from their own number to constitute, with the officers elect, a Board of Managers."

Then follow articles upon the duties of managers and officers. In the By-Laws, Article IV reads :

"The Board of Managers shall annually appoint from its own number four committees, consisting of five persons, one of whom shall be a Vice-President of the Association."

The names of these committees were as follows :

- (1) "Committee on Library and Rooms."
- (2) "Committee on Lectures."
- (3) A "Committee on Publication," which published copies of the Constitution, with a list of officers of the Association, and the locality of its rooms, and which were forwarded to the pastors of each evangelical church in Boston.
- (4) A "Committee on Finance, to devise means for obtaining the necessary funds for the Association."

By the adoption of this Constitution, the Young Men's Christian Association of Boston was organized on December 29, 1851, seven years and a half after the bedroom meeting in George Hitchcock's establishment in far away London.

The Boston Association had clearly defined principles. It was to be a work for young men.

Its aim was "to improve them spiritually and mentally."

Its controlling membership was evangelical.

Its management, like the parent Association in Lon-

don, was to be a small board of Christian men chosen by the evangelical members.

It recognized the value of bringing young men under good influences by allowing moral young men to become associate members.

Next to emphasis upon the evangelical position the greatest addition was the introduction of the committee system, which came to be characteristic of the American work. Committeemen were appointed to carry out the various plans of the organization.

There is an undoubted advance in the emphasis upon the value of the Association as a social resort. This may be seen from the address introducing the Constitution, which said: "A young man who is a stranger here finds it difficult to obtain access to Christian families or in any way to satisfy the demands of his social nature, except in places that are dangerous to his morals."

\* \* \* \* \* "We intend to make this a social organization of those in whom the love of Christ has produced love to man. We shall meet the young stranger as he enters the city, take him by the hand, direct him to a boarding house, introduce him to the Church and Sabbath School, and bring him to the rooms of the Association. By making his social atmosphere a Christian one, we believe the allurements to evil will be stripped of much of their power."

The first circular sent out in January, 1852, expressed the same hope: "The young men of Boston belonging to the four evangelical denominations have united themselves for the purpose of aiding young men who come to our city as strangers, by surrounding them with such social influences as will tend to their moral and spiritual profit."

The idea of unity of all evangelical denominations appears in all the proceedings of the Boston Association. The address just mentioned closes with a joyful note:

"We have a Christian union, so often longed for, in actual and successful operation, concentrating the Christian influences of the city and binding into one the various congregations of the Lord."

Officers were chosen on January 5th, 1852, and the Board of Managers appointed five days later. "Two months of severe labor followed. The Standing Committee and the Board of Managers met often and devoted a large portion of their time to the obtaining of funds and in interesting the Christian community in the cause. The funds needed to commence the enterprise were obtained, spacious and convenient rooms were provided, fitted up in neat and agreeable style, furnished with papers and periodicals and a foundation laid for a library."<sup>9</sup> These rooms were on the corner of Washington and Sumner Streets, and were about 80 by 30 feet in size. Mr. Francis L. Watts, a learned and Christian lawyer, a member of the Episcopal Church, was chosen President of the Association. The opening of the rooms attracted considerable attention, over six hundred young men being present. Dr. Lyman Beecher, Bishop Eastburn, and other prominent ministers were present, and made stirring addresses. The Governor of the State, Honorable George L. Briggs, and Honorable Robert C. Winthrop, were also among the guests. Dr. Beecher closed his address with these words: "I always felt sure the millennium would come, but never so sure of it before as now. I breathe a longer breath than ever I breathed before. You will stand fast and sure and go on in this good work, until your great adversary, the Devil, is turned into Hell!"

The enthusiasm, determination and large plans of the Boston Association were characteristic of the New World. In less than five months, the Association numbered 1,200 members, "most of whom were active

<sup>9</sup> Second Boston Report.

members of the Association." The secular or indirect spiritual work was carried on along four lines, under the direction of the four committees of the Board already mentioned; the Committee on Library and Rooms; Lecture Committee; the Committee on Publication and the Committee on Finance. A Vice-President was Chairman of each committee and these committees made their reports at quarterly meetings of the Board. The rooms on Washington and Sumner Streets, for which the Association paid \$650 rent yearly, although they were in the fourth story, were fitted up quite elegantly. The first report states that: "The Committee on Rooms felt the importance of a central location, easy of access and attractive to young men. If we would induce young men to frequent our rooms instead of places of danger, we must provide such as are pleasant in themselves and attractive on account of the society there found and the entertainment furnished. These considerations caused the committee to provide rooms neater and more agreeable and more attractive in all respects than the boarding houses where the young men whom we seek to benefit severally reside."

During the year 1852, the rooms were frequented and their advantages enjoyed by a large number of young men. But rooms on the fourth floor were not a favorable place for a *resort*. This was to be a prominent feature in the plans of the Boston Board. So it is not surprising that they made a vigorous effort to secure quarters nearer the ground. "The committee found a suite of rooms in the New Tremont Temple, admirably adapted for their purpose, which they could have by favor of the owners for \$1,200 per year." Tremont Temple belonged to a Baptist congregation, and while the proposed apartments would command \$1,500 rent, a reduction was made to the Association. "One of the most energetic and active members of the Standing



Committee raised the extra money necessary to pay the rent for two years," and the handsome rooms in Tremont Temple, the home of the Association for so many years, were opened early in the year 1853, scarcely eighteen months from the founding of the organization.

In accordance with the constitution, a "Librarian and Assistant Secretary" was appointed to have charge of the rooms and be a missionary among young men. The conception of a secretary as the chief executive officer was a later development. Boston has been favored with some of the ablest men in the service of the Young Men's Christian Association, and has paid them liberally, but the first secretary began his work for \$507 per year. The Board of Managers devoted a great deal of attention to the needs of the Association.

The receipts for the first eighteen months were \$6,900; the expenses \$5,008. Thirteen gentlemen contributed \$50 each, and 112 gave \$25 each. The same liberality and noble devotion which in later years has invested nearly half a million dollars in a palatial edifice and sustains an annual budget of \$35,000 for the saving of the young men of a great city was manifest in the first movement in 1851.

One of the novel features of the Boston work was the freedom with which they employed the "press and the post." In January, 1852, a circular announcing the purpose of the Association was scattered widely. Before eighteen months had passed, more than 10,000 copies of the constitution and 5,000 copies of the first address delivered before the friends of the Association in May, 1852, outlining its purpose, were sent to every pastor in New England and to hundreds of Christian men and women throughout the Union. "A large quantity of other matter necessary for the Association was printed under the direction of this committee."

With all the enterprise of the new movement, the

managers of the Association did not seem to have very definite ideas of how to carry on the religious work necessary to reach young men. The presence of Tremont Temple, with its large auditorium, in the end proved a snare and led the Board in a few years into the conducting of large evangelistic meetings for the general public, which while an excellent work, was quite aside from the original purpose of concentrating all effort to win young men.

The first step taken was to arrange through the Lecture Committee a course of Sabbath evening lectures to young men, by prominent ministers, which were delivered before the Association at the Melodeon Hall. A fee sufficient to pay expenses was charged for admission. These lectures were of great benefit and were open to the general public. Some of the ministers were inclined to complain that it drew people from their own churches, but the work prospered. In the summer of 1856, a series of tent meetings on Boston Common, addressed by leading clergymen, was undertaken. These meetings, which were attended by thousands, were kept up for a number of years, and were a means of great blessing. Even policemen bore testimony to the influence they had upon public order.

The first form of spiritual effort for young men began with the founding of the Association in a request by a number of the members that a prayer meeting be established in the rooms. A meeting was held on Monday evenings. At first it was from 9 to 10 P. M.; then at 8:30. The report for the first year says: "The meetings have been of deep interest. From fifty to seventy-five young men have been present at each meeting, and above all, the Spirit of the Lord has been with them, souls have been born there and quite a number who now rejoice in Christ attribute their conversion to the influence of this meeting." The following year this meet-

ing grew in power. It was especially characterized by unity of feeling and the enthusiasm arising from the presence of members of different denominations. This meeting continued to increase in influence until 1857 and 1858, when the great revival gave it an additional impetus.

The second year a Bible class was organized which began with a membership of 136, but soon assumed a more moderate average of twenty to thirty. Its meetings were held on Saturday evenings. Some difficulty was experienced in finding a suitable teacher, but after a year or two, Mr. Richard Gardner undertook the task. The Bible class became one of the most successful features of the Association. Unlike the British classes, which were mainly for the unconverted or for young Christians, these classes came to be especially for young men interested in Bible study and for training students for teachers in Sunday School classes. "The Acts of the Apostles," "The General Epistle of James," "The Apocalypse," and part of "The Prophecy of Isaiah" formed the course of study for one winter.

It is noticeable that the Association from its central position and union character came to be a sort of religious exchange for the churches of the city. Various religious agencies employed its rooms for assembly purposes from time to time. Pastors' Unions and Benevolent Societies met in the lecture hall.

An extensive correspondence was inaugurated throughout New England to secure information regarding young men who were coming from the country and small towns to enter business in Boston. Much effort was devoted to finding employment for young men, and many incidents are recorded of members watching by the side of the sick bed of some country lad whose home was miles away on a New England hillside.

Very pleasant relations were maintained between the Boston Association and London, which was always recognized as the parent of the movement. The first report says: "There is a similar Association in London, from which we took our idea, and with which we are in pleasant correspondence." From time to time, letters of friendly greeting were interchanged. In 1853, the Vice-President, Honorable Charles T. Russell, and two members of the Boston Association attended, as representatives of their home society, the annual meeting of the London Association and presented a report of the work in Boston.

By May, 1854, the date of the third anniversary, the Boston Association presents the picture of a young religious society filled with spiritual zeal, equipped with attractive apartments as a social resort, enrolling over 2,500 members; a compact organization, with the management in the hands of a small Board of Christian business men, elected by the evangelical members; a committee system for carrying out the plans of the Board, a clearly defined purpose to help young men spiritually and mentally, but on the whole an organization without precedents or experience to guide it.

In the meantime, the Association idea was welcomed in a great number of places. The efforts of the Publication Committee scattered information concerning the movement, not only throughout New England, but over the whole nation. Knowledge of the Montreal Association suggested to the young men of Toronto the formation of a similar society. During the years 1852 to 1854, Associations were organized mostly through the influence of Boston, in twenty-four different cities in the United States. Immediately following the founding of the Boston Society during 1852, Associations were established at the following cities in the order named: Worcester, Spring-

field, Buffalo, New York City, Washington, New London, Detroit, Concord and New Orleans.<sup>10</sup> The following year, 1853, societies were organized in as widely separate cities as Baltimore, Alexandria, Chicago, Peoria, Louisville, San Francisco, Providence, Brooklyn, Lexington, Ky., Quincy and Portland, Maine. At the close of the year there were twenty-seven Associations in the United States and Canada. They were young, inexperienced, separated from each other, but unified by a common origin, and a common purpose—the desire to win young men to Jesus Christ.

#### SEC. 17.—THE CONFEDERATION.

WILLIAM CHAUNCEY LANGDON.

Intercommunication between the American Associations existed to some extent from the first, though it was carried on in a desultory way. Chance visits brought Associations into touch; ministers and prominent laymen of one city were invited to give addresses by neighboring, and sometimes distant, associations. During the first year of its history, the Boston Society invited Dr. Stephen H. Tyng, perhaps the most active friend of the Association among the ministers of New York, to give a Sunday evening discourse. Dr. R. S. Storrs and Bishop Alonzo Potter also accepted similar invitations. In December, 1852, Hon. R. C. Winthrop, of Boston, who had been present at the opening of the rooms of the Boston Association, was invited to deliver an address before the Association at Washington. Letters and publications were constantly interchanged, especially between Boston and the newer organizations, seeking information. Between Boston, New York and Washington, and the parent Association in London, a

<sup>10</sup> Report of the Paris Convention, 1855.

friendly correspondence arose. In February, 1853, Rev. Clement M. Butler was given credentials as a delegate from the Washington Association, to such similar organizations as he might visit during a tour in Europe. Mr. Butler and the two gentlemen from Boston already mentioned visited a number of British Societies. A real contact was established in the following year. In the spring of 1854, Mr. R. C. McCormick, of New York, who had already made a tour of a number of American Associations, and had served as an officer in various capacities in the New York Society,<sup>1</sup> "having given notice of an intended visit to Europe, was duly accredited by the New York organization as its delegate to the kindred Associations of the Old World." Mr. McCormick, in the name of New York, "visited the Associations at London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester,<sup>2</sup> Huddersfield, Glasgow, Greenock, Belfast, Dublin, Limerick and Cork, with various others in Great Britain and Ireland; also those at Paris, Geneva and Turin. The most cordial welcome was extended to him, and many of the Associations passed resolutions thanking the New York Association for appointing a delegate. At every point it was insisted that Mr. McCormick should afford all the information possible concerning the progress of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States." The President's report to the New York Society the following year says: "The details concerning the work in America were listened to by thousands with the utmost delight. The young men of Europe were anxious to become familiar with the movements of their American brethren. Let us hope that the happy visit of our delegate may tend to strengthen the ties of our sympathy and love for our Christian friends in the Old World." Mr. McCormick

<sup>1</sup> See 2nd Annual Report of N. Y. Association, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> 3rd Annual Report, N. Y. Association, p. 11.



did much by interviews with leading workers and by his public addresses to arouse a sense of unity and a desire for fellowship among the Associations of the world, and especially to draw the American and European Societies into closer relations and prepare the way for the first conference of Associations of all lands held a year later at Paris during the Industrial Exhibition of 1855.

In 1853, the Association at Cincinnati became affiliated with the general movement, and a knowledge of the Montreal and Toronto organizations reached several of the societies in the United States. In a little over two years, Associations with similar constitutions had sprung up in the leading cities of America. A feeling of common origin, a common purpose, and a common need of each other's sympathy, fellowship and encouragement was ripening into the inevitable fruition, a union which should weld together not only Associations of the same country into national organization, but which would soon establish a bond of fellowship between Christian young men throughout the cities of the Protestant world.

The man whose name above every other is identified with the early period of the American Associations is Rev. William Chauncy Langdon, of the American Episcopal Church. He did not have the evangelistic gift of Dwight L. Moody, the loving devotion of Sir George Williams, or the leadership of Robert R. McBurney, or R. C. Morse. But though his service to the Association was not equal to the service of any of these, and his connection was limited to a few years, while the Association endures his name will not be forgotten. He was a man of prophetic faith, and endowed with the gifts of an organizer, an intense spirit, yet a man of wide horizon. He failed as a diplomat, but succeeded by his determination and enthusiasm. As early as

September, 1852, when the Washington Association was but three months old, his mind was filled with the vision of a net-work of Christian Associations for young men established in every city of the New World, bound together by ties of a common origin and a common purpose, meeting annually in convention and working unitedly as independent members of a common federation. A year later he had grasped the idea of a world union, and in June, 1854, on the floor of the first American convention, he said: "Already two hundred and fifty such brotherhoods, scattered throughout every nation, people, kindred and tongue, lift up their hearts in unison to the same Savior and Redeemer, and it scarcely needs prophetic inspiration now for the heart confident and trusting in Him to look forward to a rapidly approaching hour when the young men of the age shall have risen in their strength, nay, rather in the strength of the Lord God of Hosts, and when through them the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."<sup>3</sup> To Mr. Langdon's faith and generalship the American Associations owe the Confederation,—the first form of the Association as an international movement. Mr. Langdon also suggested a system of correspondence between the Associations throughout the world, which was adopted at the Paris Conference of 1855.

The Washington Association played an important part in the early history of the American movement. The capital, to a greater extent than any other city, was filled with transient young men whom the system of distributing government patronage over different sections of the country drew to the seat of government. These young men who occupied positions in Washington seldom looked upon their residence as permanent, but regarded themselves as citizens of the home section which

<sup>3</sup> First American Convention Report, 1854, p. 49.

they represented. It is not surprising that the Association of this city should have been the first to be interested in a federation of the various Associations. Two other causes already suggested were, however, more potent. First, the presence in Washington of a young man fired with enthusiasm for a national organization, and second, the longing of the weaker organizations for fellowship and mutual support.

In April, 1852, a copy of the constitution of the Boston Society had fallen into the hands of the Rev. C. M. Butler, Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church of Washington. The peculiar needs of the young men of Washington seemed to Dr. Butler to demand just such an organization as the Boston Constitution described. William Chauncy Langdon, who had recently been appointed from Kentucky an Assistant Examiner in the United States Patent Office, was a member of Dr. Butler's church. Dr. Butler placed the Constitution of the Boston Association in his hands, with the suggestion that a similar work was needed in Washington. After considerable effort, a meeting of 60 young men gathered on June 10th, 1852, in the Masonic Hall, to consider the matter of organizing a Young Men's Christian Association in Washington. This was accomplished on June 29th, by the adoption of a constitution similar to that of the Boston organization. In August, six months later, Mr. Langdon, who was made Corresponding Secretary of the new Association, visited Boston and learned with interest that there were already seven similar societies in America. On his return, he planned a federation of these societies and proposed that the Washington Association endorse it. The meeting was an animated one, the proposition being warmly discussed. The idea was finally adopted with enthusiasm and a committee appointed to report on the project. On October 18th, the Washington Association almost to a man adopted a

resolution favoring some form of union with the other Young Men's Christian Associations of the nation, and adding to its own constitution an amendment granting members of other Associations, transiently in Washington, the privileges of the Washington organization.

Polity has played a most important part in the history of all organizations, political, social, educational and religious. Broadly speaking, polity is either authoritative or voluntary. Certainly in all forms of its operation society has been moving away from the military centralization in church, state, industry, school and family, which characterized early periods of development, and which were perhaps essential to a childhood period of humanity. It is a testimony to the wisdom of its leaders that the Young Men's Christian Association has built up a voluntary, not an authoritative polity. The Salvation Army is the one marked exception of an extensive religious organization in recent years erected on the military principle, but this is explained by the uncontrolled class among which it labors. Centralized polity achieves results, voluntary polity makes men. It is successful to just the extent its supporters are loyal and self-controlled.

Langdon's name will be forever associated with the polity of the Young Men's Christian Association.

Immediately following the Association meeting in Washington, of October 18th, 1852, in which the plan of a federation was adopted, Mr. Langdon addressed a letter to the "New York Association, proposing that that society, as the larger and more important, should take the lead in the matter."<sup>4</sup> No reply was received to this communication. New York, the Association destined to lead the American movement during the succeeding periods of its history, was sadly indifferent to the interest or possibility

<sup>4</sup> Early story of the Confederation, page 9.

of the work at large during these first years. This concentration on the home field was largely due to the efforts of one man, who made the New York local work a success in the face of many difficulties, and who afterwards, as chairman of the Committee on the Evangelical Test, formed the one theological symbol of the American Associations. Dr. Howard Crosby, then a professor and writer, who afterwards became prominent as a pastor and as Chancellor of the University of New York, was the leading spirit in the New York Association at the time. For three years, 1856 to 1859, he was its president, and by his vigorous personality, common sense, and clear insight he held the Association definitely to its main purpose, and did much to win a place for it among the institutions of the American metropolis. He was opposed to the New York Association's identifying itself with any central movement.

Two distinct attitudes toward the proposed confederation rapidly developed. The strong Associations, Boston, New York, Baltimore, and Brooklyn, containing one-half of the entire membership in the country, for various reasons were unwilling to lend their adhesion to the plan proposed. The smaller Associations, especially in the West, became more and more favorable to some form of union. It was a difficult matter in the face of opposition and indifference from the four Associations named to make much progress.

When the confederation was finally established, the New York Association would send no official delegates, and later gave its adhesion to the Central Committee, merely as to a committee of correspondence. The position of the New York Association is seen from its action when requested to entertain the second convention of the Associations. Professor Crosby replied officially to the request, that the New York Association had unanimously decided in full meeting that they deemed any

convention inexpedient, and declined any connection with it. The reasons given for this position were stated:

"(1) We believe conventions draw off attention from local work, and our institution is essentially local.

(2) We believe they foster a centralizing spirit at war with independent action.

(3) We believe they will tend to produce unpleasant scenes and ruptures on such subjects as *slavery*.

(4) We believe the expense unauthorized by our main object.

(5) We believe fraternal feelings between the Associations may be better cultivated by correspondence and chance visits."

This letter is characteristic of Dr. Crosby, and illustrated forcibly the position maintained by the New York Association.

His real objection was fear of division over the slavery question, which later caused very serious disturbance in the New York Society itself.

Mr. Langdon, in writing of this period, says: "In fact, without being as yet fully conscious of it, perhaps on either side, two Associations were representative types of two distinct principles.

"To the New York Society its work and purpose were all at hand, all its efforts, attention, and interest were concentrated upon the home work, save only so far as occasion might from time to time involve correspondence with some other body. The Washington Association, on the contrary, whose membership was gathered from every portion of the Union, with thoughts and prayers divided between scenes and friends at home and those around, became even more naturally the exponent of the movement for a national organization."<sup>5</sup>

Not discouraged by the indifference already mentioned, Mr. Langdon, in February, 1853, addressed another com-

<sup>5</sup> Early History of the Confederation.



munication to the New York Association, but received no reply. Rev. Dr. Butler brought back to the Washington Association, publications of the London Society, and gave a glowing account of its work. Mr. Langdon now corresponded with London, Geneva, and Paris, and visited New York, Boston, and Baltimore, to propose the publishing of an American Association Journal. The proposition was not even considered by Boston or Baltimore. The New York Association gave Mr. Langdon a hearing, after which Prof. Crosby frankly stated his objection to the proposition and the Association voted against it. Mr. Langdon did not for a moment abandon the project of a national union. He was, at the close of 1853, in correspondence with 18 out of the 22 American Associations, and early in 1854, he prepared a careful account of the Association movement throughout the world, which then included, according to his information, 230 societies. This report produced a deep impression both in Washington and in the other American Associations. It showed the wide-spread character and vigor of the movement. The Washington Association now proposed if any other Association would act with it, to call a convention of delegates of all the Associations in the United States and Canada, to consider the forming of a federation. New York again declined. Buffalo, however, consented to unite with Washington in inviting such a convention and offered to entertain the gathering. A few days later the Boston Association, though it afterward refused to approve the acts of the convention, agreed to unite with Washington and Buffalo in issuing the call. Circulars were sent out inviting the conference. Reference was made to the alliance of the Jünglings-Verein, existing in West Germany, to a Swiss union which had just been completed, and to the alliance of the British societies as branches of the London Society. The circular proposed "A convention of delegates to con-

fer together relative to the formation of an American Young Men's Christian Alliance, a union of *independent, equal, but co-operating Associations*, to secure such uniformity of organization and action as may be thought desirable." <sup>6</sup>

It is unnecessary to enter into the details of the preparation for this important gathering, the first convention of leaders in specific work for young men in an English speaking country which ever assembled. It was ten years since George Williams had gathered with eleven others in the little bedroom of the ware-house in St. Paul's Churchyard. Like the influence from that earlier meeting in an upper chamber at Jerusalem, the influence of this little group of young men had already reached widely separated sections of the world, and now from Portland, Maine, to San Francisco, from New Orleans to Toronto, Canada, representatives were gathering to consider how to inaugurate on a plan commensurate with the needs of a continent, the work of moulding the character of young men. The delegates were all young, there was scarcely a man 40 years of age among them; the majority were under 30, and their leader was only 23 years old. There were 37 delegates, from 19 societies; 34 of these delegates were laymen. Buffalo was not stirred by the presence of a large body of young men. There was no promise of the great conventions of later years, which should attract the attention of the Protestant world. But it was a prophetic meeting. A spirit of harmony and fellowship welded into one the hearts of the young men present, as on the first evening session they united in singing the words which have since become the convention hymn of the Associations, "Blest be the Tie that Binds our Hearts in Christian Love." They felt themselves on the crest of a victorious movement,

<sup>6</sup> See circular calling first Convention, First American Report, 1854.

and their convictions were voiced in the reading by the delegate from Boston of the Sixtieth Chapter of Isaiah. "The little one shall become a thousand, and the small one a strong nation; I, the Lord, will hasten it in its time."

The convention assembled on the 7th day of June, 1854, in the rooms of the Buffalo Association. Mr. George W. Helme, of New Orleans, as a pledge, so to speak, to the South, that the slavery question should not be discussed, was chosen president. New York, Baltimore and Brooklyn were not represented. Boston was represented by three delegates, who sought to secure, for future conventions, representation in proportion to membership in behalf of the large city Associations. It was largely because this was not granted that the proceedings of the convention were not ratified by the Boston Association.

The leaders in this convention were from Washington and Cincinnati. The two great issues were the formation of an alliance and the proper object to which the Associations should direct their efforts. Washington and Cincinnati took the same position on both issues, but the Washington delegates were the chief advocates of the federation, and the Cincinnati delegation of mission Sunday School work as an object for Association endeavor. Mr. Langdon, the real leader of the convention, was delayed and did not arrive until the second day. A motion had already been passed which, if allowed to remain, would have defeated the idea of a confederation. It was simply a recommendation that annual conventions be held, and a committee of three be appointed to publish the report. On the second day, Mr. Neff, of Cincinnati, and Mr. Langdon moved a reconsideration of this decision, and most earnestly and eloquently advocated the forming of an alliance that should promote with vigor the work of winning young

men. The substitute plan brought forward was finally adopted by the unanimous vote of the delegates of 17 Associations, the representatives of Boston, who at first opposed the plan, altering their votes in its favor. The resolutions adopted were as follows:

*Resolved*, 1. That this convention recommend to the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces the formation of a voluntary confederation for their mutual encouragement, co-operation, and usefulness, and that they recommend that when 22 Associations shall concur in the plan hereafter suggested, the said confederation shall go into operation.

2. That a convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the United States and British Provinces be held annually at such time and places as may be determined.<sup>7</sup>

3. That while it would oftentimes be judicious to discuss in convention principles of organization and action, this body shall have no authority or control over the local affairs of any Association.

4. That a Central Committee be appointed, to consist of eleven members, five of whom shall be residents of the city where the committee shall, for the time being, be located, and shall be members of different religious denominations; the remaining six to be selected from the Associations generally, not more than one member from any one Association.

5. That the Central Committee shall maintain correspondence with American and Foreign kindred bodies, promote the formation of new Associations, and collect and diffuse appropriate information, and from time to time recommend to the Associations such measures as may seem calculated to promote the general object, but it shall not have authority to commit any local Association to any proposed plan of action until approved by said Association, nor to assess any pecuniary rate upon them without their consent.

6. That the Central Committee be appointed by this Convention and continue in office until their successors are appointed by a subsequent convention.

7. That the Central Committee shall ascertain the wishes of the different Associations in regard to the time and place of holding each annual convention, and shall issue the call as nearly as possible in accordance therewith.

By the adoption of these resolutions the most important step in the establishment of the confederation was

<sup>7</sup> Report of first American Convention, 1854, page 36.

accomplished. A committee of thirteen, with five of its members resident at Washington as headquarters, was appointed, and Mr. Chauncy Langdon made secretary of the committee. Through his efforts, by January 15th of the following year, 22 Associations had given in their allegiance, and the confederation became a fact. The Associations of the United States and Canada thus began an affiliated organized life. The organization was exceedingly loose, but it was the source from which has developed the supervening agencies to which the American Associations owe much of their usefulness. From that hour, the Association began to awake to self-consciousness, and to feel the strength of unity and fellowship and the inspiration of a great mission.

The second important action of the Buffalo convention was the result of a proposition from the Cincinnati delegation regarding the mission of the Association. Mr. J. H. Marshall, one of the founders of the Cincinnati society, and especially active in its mission Sunday School work, on the afternoon of the first day introduced a resolution recommending that the Associations of America engage in Union Sunday School work, and the formation of adult Bible classes. The matter was referred for consideration to a committee, of which Mr. Marshall was made chairman. The morning of the second day of the convention, the committee made an extended report. Mr. Marshall spoke earnestly in behalf of Bible instruction for both children and adults. His address made a deep impression on the convention. An earnest discussion followed, in which the measure was favored by all except delegates from Pittsburgh and Toronto. The report as finally adopted was as follows:

“The committee to whom were referred the resolutions from the Cincinnati delegation would respectfully report:

“That they have considered the subject of mission work among the masses, and in accordance with the



spirit and action of the London, Boston, and Cincinnati Associations, would recommend the establishment of Sunday Schools and the organization of adult Bible classes, as the initiative of this great work.' It appears to the committee that this would be peculiarly the legitimate work of Young Men's Christian Associations. The committee would, therefore, recommend:

"That this General Convention of Associations recommend to the various local Associations the establishment of at least one Mission Sunday School, to be the agent and creature of the Association; also of adult Bible classes, where practicable, to form the nucleus of enlarged future missionary efforts, of the same and kindred character, among the masses of the population of our large cities." <sup>7a</sup>

The adoption of these resolutions gave a decided impetus to the spiritual work of the Associations. This was not the beginning of Sunday School work as a feature of the Association's activity, but it emphasized it as one of the chief objects of Association endeavor, and thus led the Associations to deviate from their original and proper purpose—the winning of young men.

There was another important matter which came up for consideration at this convention. There were three great questions, upon whose right solution the future of the American Association depended. The first was the mission of the society; second, the condition of membership in the Association; and third, the relation of the Association to the Evangelical churches. The second of these questions came up for discussion at this convention. An examination of the Associations represented showed that the conditions of membership were not uniform; two Associations opened their membership to all young men of good moral character. One, Cleveland, required that officers be members of

<sup>7a</sup> First American Convention Report, 1854, p. 28.



Evangelical churches. One, Cincinnati, admitted to membership only members of Evangelical churches. The larger number, however, followed the example of Boston and admitted two classes of members; active, young men who were members of Evangelical churches; associate, young men of good moral character; only active members being allowed to vote or hold office. A delegate from Cleveland introduced a resolution recommending to the various Associations the Boston plan, that active membership, with the privilege of voting and holding office, be restricted to members of Evangelical churches. This resolution, principally because the convention feared it would be regarded as an interference with the affairs of local Associations, was amended before adoption to read as follows:

*"Resolved, That while we agree in the importance of an evangelical basis for the operation of our Associations, and while we look to members of these churches for our leading and governing influences, and in order to preserve the Christian element, we recommend that such only should hold office, or vote on alterations of the constitution; this convention is decidedly of the opinion that the qualifications for the different kinds of membership can be best determined by each Association for itself, as being the best judges of the circumstances of the case, and that uniformity of action cannot, without greater experience, be asked or expected of our Associations by this convention."*<sup>8</sup>

This indefinite action was without doubt the wisest course that could have been taken at the time. The American Associations were destined after years of experience to demonstrate anew that the surest way to build noble and solid character in young men was by standing unfalteringly on the evangelical basis. They learned later that this very position would make them a welcomed auxiliary to the church and secure them the favor of the ministry and of benevolent and earnest laymen.

<sup>8</sup> Report First Convention, 1854, page 59.

Mr. Langdon, at the close of the convention, gave a careful address on the Association movement throughout the world. Mr. Helme, of New Orleans, the president, as he rose to announce the adjournment, said: "He rejoiced at the successful issue of the convention. Great fears were entertained that it would be the scene of wrangling and strife, that sectional issues would be agitated, causing an adjournment without action on many of the important topics for which it conferred. No agitation, however, of these questions has taken place, and the convention, embracing delegates from Maine to California, has met and adjourns, bound in heartfelt ties, strengthened manifold by even the short time they had been together. Should the Associations persevere in their annual assemblage, the 7th of June, 1854, would be remembered with pride and gratification." Thus was accomplished the forming of the Confederation, the beginning of the affiliated life of the American Associations.

The New World at the beginning of 1855 presented the spectacle in 36 of its leading cities of organized groups of young men, varying in membership from 50 to 2,500, inspired by a love for Jesus Christ, eager to grow in spiritual life, and for the most part devoting their energies to win the young men of American cities to the same allegiance. These groups of young men were further united to each other by unity of origin and of organization, and by the bonds of a voluntary federation. It has been said the first period of American Association History extended from 1851 to 1866, when the American Associations became more thoroughly organized. Two important steps of this early period were completed by January 18th, 1855—the founding of the movement in America under the leadership of Boston and Montreal, and the establishment of the Confederation under the leadership of William Chauncy Langdon, of Washington.

## CHAPTER IV.

### FOUNDING OF THE CONTINENTAL ASSOCIATION.

#### SEC. 18.—GENERAL CONDITIONS ON THE CONTINENT.

We turn from the restless, aggressive industrial communities of the New World to the more conservative and military atmosphere of the European Continent. The most prominent contrast presented by Protestantism is the union, almost the subjection of the Church to the Government. The Church is the department of the State devoted to the maintenance of religion as other departments are devoted to maintain education or the army.

Americans can hardly appreciate the different attitude which Europeans take upon this question. It is largely a matter of heart and a conviction that it takes away the character of Christian from a nation to separate the Church from the Government. Even republican Geneva, on July 4, 1880, rejected by a vote of 9,300 to 4,844 a proposition recommended by the "Great Council" to bring about a separation between the Church and the State. This feeling is voiced by as liberal a thinker as Henri Amiel, who penned in his journal on the day of the vote: "The sun has come out after heavy rain. May one take it as an omen on this solemn day? The great voice of Clemence has just been sounding in our ears. The bells' deep vibration went to my heart. For a quarter of an hour the pathetic appeal went on. 'Geneva! Geneva! Remember! I am called Clem-

ence. I am the voice of Church and of Country. People of Geneva, serve God and be at peace together.'"<sup>9</sup>

In Europe, the hoary traditions of the past confront every new movement in industrial, political and religious life. The Continent has an atmosphere of its own, and it is not surprising that movements with the same purpose should have different developments in the two worlds, the old and the new. Protestant effort on the Continent naturally centers in Germany, the "heart of Europe," "the land of the Reformation." It is here that the endeavor to mold the character of young men has had its chief European development. Next to Germany, the center on the Continent from which the movement has exerted an influence is Geneva, the present headquarters of the World's Federation of Young Men's Christian Associations. The Continental societies are more limited in the range of their activities than the American or British, but this is due more to a lack of financial resources than to a different conception of the aim of the Associations. The Geneva Association and the societies which were influenced by it in their origin trace their inspiration to the London movement. The German Jünglings-Verein, like several Scotch and American societies, has a much earlier history and is unwilling to regard the London Association as the founder of the Association movement. Societies of young men for religious and moral improvement are very old<sup>10</sup>—much older than either the Jünglings-Verein of Germany or the Nasmith movement in Scotland and the United States. The idea of organizing young men for the purpose of improving themselves and other young men spiritually certainly did not origi-

<sup>9</sup> Amiel's Journal, English Edition, Mrs. H. Ward, 1893, vol. II., p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> Association Hand-Book, New York, 1892, pp. 30-35. (See Chapter on "History of the Young Men's Christian Association.")

nate with either the London Association or the German Jünglings-Verein. But the practical application of this idea in a form which was destined to spread over the world under a name which was to be generally accepted, as well as the spiritual power to compel the acceptance of this idea, were born with the London society, founded by George Williams.

It was the movement inaugurated at London which has marshalled the Christian young men of the cities of Protestantism into a compact organization to win young men, and which has given the distinctive character to this world-wide institution.

The German Associations had an earlier origin, and have evolved a method of operation adapted to the surroundings in which they are placed. They are the best and most vigorous example of the movement on the Continent

The Jünglings-Verein and the Christlicher Verein junger Männer of American origin are the result of forces in the German Evangelical Church, nobly striving to meet the needs of young men in the midst of new industrial conditions.

## SEC. 19.—PREPARATION IN THE GERMAN CHURCH.

It is impossible here to trace adequately the development of the religious forces in Germany which have created the characteristics peculiar to the German Young Men's Christian Associations.

The religious condition of Germany at the founding of the Jünglings-Verein was the result of a long struggle between Rationalism and the party in the Church which stood for practical Christian life and effort.

The Reformation on the Continent had been followed by a handing over of the Church to the domination of the various civil governments. There was

no ecclesiastical organization, as in England, to resist the appropriation by the State of the management of the Church. This subjection of the Church to the State was followed by the reign of Rationalism and a prevalence of theological discussion.<sup>1</sup> Dr. F. W. Krummacher, of Berlin, speaking before the Evangelical Alliance in 1851, said: "Rationalism, or that form of theology which indicated human reason as the supreme authority on religious subjects, denied supernatural revelation, and the necessity of salvation to man, disputed that God was able to work miracles, and only accepted Christ as the teacher of natural religion and of a better morality, ascended from the middle of the eighteenth century in Germany to such an extended dominion that the few isolated believers in Revelation began seriously to fear that the Lord might have determined entirely to extinguish from his holy temple the light of the Gospel."<sup>2</sup> On account of its union with the State, the Church had to bear the brunt of the mistakes of the civil power. Opposition to the Church came to be looked upon as opposition to the Government. The Church in the eyes of the multitude was responsible with the State for the maintenance of the existing order in political affairs. For this reason republican and democratic movements on the Continent have been hostile to the Church and religion. The subjection of the Church to the State has made the Church the supporter of conservative and monarchical institutions, instead of leaving it free to minister to the spiritual needs of the people and bear witness to the truth. For this reason, free institutions have been on the Continent so largely associated with irreligion, and this want of the conserving influence of religion among the democratic parties of Germany and other European

<sup>1</sup> Hase's "History of the Christian Ch'ch," English Edition, sec. 402.

<sup>2</sup> Alliance Report, 1851, p. 419.



countries has often made those parties lawless and violent. As a result of its subjection to the State, and the admission of unconverted men into a large share in church government and the consequent reign of Rationalism, religious life in Germany at the close of the eighteenth century and the beginning of this was at a sadly low ebb. The Church was split up into the same small political divisions as the Empire. The appointment of pastors and theological professors, and the government of the Church were in the hands of the civil power. Support of the Gospel, instead of being a voluntary act of worship, was a matter of taxation. The simple edict of the King of Prussia was sufficient to effect in 1817 the union of the two great bodies of the Church in Prussia—the Lutheran and the Reformed. The Church was looked upon simply “as the religious element in the State.”<sup>2a</sup> Pastors held an official relation to their people. There was no possibility of a distinction between believers and unbelievers. All practical Christian work was paralyzed by the prevailing teaching that every one born and baptized in a Christian country is a Christian, and that the province of the Church is to instruct rather than to convert. It is not surprising that only nine to ten per cent. of the population in the country districts attended church and from two to three per cent. in the large towns. Fully 99 per cent. of the children were baptized and 93 per cent. of those of proper age were confirmed, but it was estimated that only a small per cent. of those confirmed were really Christians. Confirmation was looked upon as the liberation of the lad from school and parental control, and often celebrated as such.<sup>3</sup> Young working men passed almost completely out from under the influence

<sup>2a</sup> Fisher's “History of the Christian Church,” period VI., chap. 5.

<sup>3</sup> “Die Mission an den Jünglingen,” by J. Hesekei, Berlin, 1864.

of the pastors after confirmation when they began to earn their own living as apprentices. Two prevailing sentiments characterized the body of young working men—"unbelief in the Word of God" and "indifference and hostility to the Church." The French Revolution had done much by awakening aspirations for free institutions among the people to arouse opposition to the Church, which was looked upon as the supporter of royalty. The result was a manifest tendency to substitute philosophy for religion.

On the other hand, there had always existed a party in the German Church who believed in Revelation, who sympathized with a practical application of Christianity to the lives of individuals, and who were active in works of love and benevolence. Spener and Franke, who were the founders of the Orphan Home at Halle, the leaders of a party called in reproach the Pietists, the Moravians under the leadership of Zinzendorf, Hans Hague, John Oberlin and many others, had by example and teaching proclaimed the necessity of carrying the Gospel to individuals and of ministering to both the spiritual and temporal wants of men. It was this party which made the effort to heal the distractions caused by the Napoleonic wars, and which founded the various agencies for infusing the Gospel into the life of the people and caring for their necessities. It was to this party after the shock of 1848 to which Germany turned, under the leadership of Pastor T. H. Wichern, the founder of the Inner Mission, for a revival of faith and for the spiritual power to stem the forces which strove to overthrow all the institutions of society.

The beginning of the century was marked by the efforts of believing men in all parts of Germany to minister to the spiritual and temporal necessities of their fellow men. Christian H. Zeller, of Würtemberg,

founded in 1820 a voluntary institution for training teachers to devote themselves to the instruction of poor children. From Basle, Switzerland, in this period, there went forth an influence for practical Christian work. Baron von Kottwitz was instrumental in establishing after the depression in 1806 agencies for furnishing work for the unemployed.<sup>4</sup> Amiel Sieveking, during the cholera plague in Hamburg, organized a sisterhood for the help of the sick. In 1825, the first Sunday-school of Germany was founded at Hamburg. In 1833, Pastor Fliedner, at Kaisersworth, with one young woman, began the Deaconess work of Germany; in 1836, he organized the "Rheinisch Westfälische Diakonissen-Verein," which has been the means of extending the Deaconess work over Germany and other lands. Fifty years have achieved marvelous results. "In 1894, there were in the Evangelical churches of Germany between 50 and 70 Deaconess homes. The number of the deaconesses was about 8,000, who were engaged in a great variety of activities. Six hundred were nurses in hospitals; 130 worked in poor-houses and infirmaries; 700 as parish helpers; 100 in orphanages; 340 in schools for small children, the rest in rescue houses, industrial schools, homes for fallen women, blind asylums and prisons."<sup>5</sup>

Many other institutions for the amelioration of all classes of society were established during this period, chief of which was an institution for neglected children, the Rauhe House, at Hamburg, under the management of Pastor T. H. Wichern. The Revolution of 1848 opened the eyes of believing Germans to the misery and irreligion which prevailed throughout the Father-

<sup>4</sup> "Leitfaden der Inneren Mission," Theo. Schafer, Hamburg, 1893, sec. 8.

<sup>5</sup> "Werberufe für die Arbeit der Inneren Mission," Seyfarth, Leipzig, 1804.

land. A church conference was called in September of that year at Wittenberg to consider plans of meeting the rising tide of unbelief. The leading figures in this conference, which was attended by 500 representatives, were two prominent laymen and Pastor T. H. Wichern, then a young mission worker from Hamburg. This conference, called primarily to promote a spirit of harmony and union between all parties in the Church, instead of attempting to answer the dogmatic questions by which the Church was agitated, endeavored to carry out its mission by fostering the practical work of Christianity, and by bringing into interrelations the various benevolent and philanthropic agencies already established. In 1843, a phrase had come into current use describing these agencies, this term "Innere Mission" was now formally adopted, and the "Kirchentag" appointed a central committee to foster these various agencies throughout Germany. The leading member of this committee was the man already mentioned, who had been drawn into this practical work through superintending a Sunday-school at Hamburg, Pastor T. H. Wichern. This central committee, by the calling of conferences, by publications, visitation and by agitation, aroused the believing elements of Germany and united them in building up a vast net-work of agencies for relieving suffering, ignorance and misery, and bringing the Gospel to all classes of society. At the Wittenberg Conference, Pastor Wichern pointed out that "against the lawlessness of the Revolution, Christianity and the spirit of love alone had prevailed." He declared "that the great social questions of the present time are not to be solved by canons and bayonets, but by the Word of God." At the Evangelical Alliance at London, in 1851, he said: "The Inner Mission seeks to engage all living Christians in its works of usefulness; it proceeds upon the principle upon which the Protestant Church

is itself founded, the universal priesthood of Christians." In speaking of the work among the poor, he said: "An impassable gulf has arisen between the rich and the poor. No stream of gold can fill it. It can only be filled by the love which is born of God. What we should give to the poor is not so much money, or food, or clothing, but ourselves." <sup>6</sup>

The Inner Mission embraces Bible societies, city missions, Sunday schools, colportage, Christian lodging houses, work among neglected children, criminals, seamen, the poor, the unemployed, and the helpless. It is a work independent in its government of the State Church, and supported by voluntary contribution. Among the agencies which were founded during this first period of Inner Mission work was the German Young Men's Christian Association, which sought to hold apprentices after confirmation in continued loyalty to the Church. The anti-rationalistic party in Germany at the beginning of the century began to answer their opponents more and more by deeds of love and practical Christian effort among the people. It was from this party that the inspiration came to organize the Jünglings-Verein, the first German Young Men's Christian Association.

## SEC. 20.—SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN GERMANY.

A profound industrial change was taking place among working men. This is not the place to discuss the establishment of new relations between capital and labor, the influence of the discovery of new methods of production and new means of transportation, which make modern life so different from what it was a few generations ago. The important fact is the changed social life which these innovations forced on Germany's working men. The boy who left home to learn a trade no

<sup>6</sup> Alliance Report for 1851, p. 483.

longer lived in the family, ate at the same table, or went to church on Sunday morning with his employer, as his father had done before him. In 1786, an employer in Leipsic stated that his workmen were under agreement "to go to church once on Sunday, and never to go out nights without his permission."<sup>7</sup> The "master was often a sort of priest or patriarch for his household." Between 1800 and 1820, this social relation became entirely changed.

Masters began to employ large numbers of "hands," often of both sexes. The practice of "binding apprentices" for a number of years declined. The working men's guilds of former years were almost extinct. The working men, especially the unmarried men, became a roving class, who went in great numbers on foot from city to city. For the twenty years previous to 1860, the fluctuations of working men in Berlin averaged 30,000 annually; in Frankfort for 1860, it was 8,000; in Kassel, 30,000.<sup>8</sup> As a result of the increased numbers employed by one master, and of this nomadic life, the cheap lodging house made its debut. It became the regular home of the young working man in the place of the master's family.

The young workman's bedroom was wretched and dismal, "cold in winter and hot in summer." "Both sexes were often herded indiscriminately together." "The conscience of many became so hardened that they defended immorality as necessary to satisfy nature." A military physician states that in a country village he found 175 young men incapacitated for service on account of impure lives. That a single incident of such a character occurred shows the low state of public sentiment and morals. In 1855, two-thirds of

<sup>7</sup> Krummacher's "Die Evangelischen Jünglings-Vereine," pp. 2 and 3.

<sup>8</sup> Die Mission an den Jünglingen, Dr. Hesekiel, pp. 3-7.



all the working men of Bonn lived in cheap lodging houses; in 1860, this was true of over half of those in Elberfeld. The young working man had ceased to be a member of his master's family, and had become a homeless wanderer, surrounded by new temptations, which soon arose with this new social condition.

It is an interesting fact that during this period the beer halls, whose bright, attractive rooms were open to all, increased with alarming rapidity. Superintendent Hesekei, while traveling secretary for the West Deutscher Bund, in 1862, wrote:

"These beer halls became the source of unspeakable evil, especially to young men. In 1862, in Prussia there were 45,000 beer halls." Dr. Krummacher, in his history of the German Jünglings-Verein, emphasizes the fact that the theatres also began to increase in number, and to present demoralizing French plays. The theatre and beer hall became the social resort of the young working man of the cheap lodging house. Dr. Hesekei says: "This manner of life drove the working man, already disposed to unbelief, still farther away from the Church."

It was to meet this condition of affairs that a church without the evangelistic spirit called the Jünglings-Verein into existence. It was not a movement to evangelize young men so much as a noble effort to find a home for the homeless young working men of Germany and bring them under Christian influence. Its religious work was devotional instruction, and it aimed to hold young men who had been confirmed in continued allegiance and fellowship with the Established Church. "The movement had the twofold purpose of bringing young men back into Christian fellowship through the Word of God and to overthrow their indifference and unbelief."

SEC. 21.—ORIGIN OF THE JÜNGLINGS-VEREINE.<sup>9</sup>

In 1708, a Swiss minister, named Pastor Mayennock, established a religious association for the young men of his congregation at Basle, which, while it was suspended between the years 1820 to 1825, may properly be called the forerunner of the Jünglings-Vereine of Germany. This Basle society was composed of nine unmarried brethren, who had five rules of discipline. They agreed “(1) to abide strictly by the teaching of the Word of God and the apostolic faith; (2) to shun all sectarianism and anything that might seduce to it; (3) each one shall be true toward God, himself, and all men; (4) each shall have the privilege, shall even be under obligation to reprove and remind the others of their faults; (5) especially shall each one take care never to tell evil stories about the others, that good-will toward one another may be strengthened.”

From these regulations it will be seen that the objects of the society were solely spiritual and moral. There were neither written laws, constitution, nor organization. It was simply a fellowship meeting of young men with their pastor.

During the first three decades of the century the longing to do something for young men is seen in the number of societies of a similar character to this movement at Basle, which sprang up independently in different parts of Germany, notably at Stuttgart and Elberfeld. They are evidence of a growing conviction that special effort for young men was needed, and are a recognition of the new conditions and temptations surrounding them.

<sup>9</sup> “Fifty Years of Work for Young Men,” London, 1894, p. 274. Krummacher’s “Die Evangelischen Jünglings-Vereine,” Kap. 3. “Die Jünglings-Vereine in Deutschland,” D. v. Gertzen, Heilbronn, 1886, Sec. 2. “Die Jünglings- und Jungfrauen-Vereine,” Schwanbeck, Gotha, 1890, Chap. III.

In the year 1833, Dr. Frederick Mallet, of Bremen, during a summer visit to Switzerland, became acquainted with the simple movement among the young men at Basle. It appealed to him as being just the needed organization to hold young men after confirmation. When he returned home, he published an account of this society, with an appeal for a similar work. The people of his congregation became interested. "Two rooms were rented in the center of the city which were soon filled to overflowing with men and young men of different callings." Dr. Mallet saw very quickly that religious teaching alone was not sufficient to accomplish his purpose. The working men had no homes or elevating social surroundings for their leisure hours, and many of them had but little education. It was decided to add amusements or "entertainment," as it was styled, and instruction. In 1834, there was organized in Bremen the first Jünglings-Verein, or Young Men's Union, for the purpose of giving young men devotional, social and intellectual opportunities. Its aim was embodied in the following statement, which is still used in West Germany :

It shall be the object of this association, (1), "to foster under the direction and influence of the Word of God, Christian sentiments and godly conduct among our young men ; (2), to oppose as much as possible all the perils which beset young men through the temptations of the world, particularly through the beer halls ; (3), to unite young men in Christian union and fellowship ; (4), through the increase of their knowledge to enable them to be more skillful in their daily work ; (5), to serve sick and destitute young men by relief and attendance."

These three departments—intellectual, social and devotional—rapidly became the leading characteristics of the new association, which soon enrolled 300 mem-

bers, and was given a home in the new parish building of the city. In organization, the Bremen Verein was substantially like the Jünglings-Vereine of to-day. The constitution contained three features, a president, usually a pastor; the managing committee, which were chosen from the membership, with often some older men who were interested in the work; the membership consisting of all young men of the parish who desired to unite with the society. The majority were young working men under twenty-five years of age. It was a compact, simple organization, with three definite ideas; a practical movement adapted to the needs of the times. It satisfied the aspiration of the better spirits among the young working men, and gave them some needed comforts and opportunities; it helped the pastors to hold many young men who were slipping away from their influence. It was a recognition of the actual conditions surrounding young working men and the duty laid upon followers of Jesus Christ. This movement soon began to attract attention as a practical effort to help young men.

In 1836, a young mechanic from Mecklenburg, who, while at work at his trade in Bremen, had become interested in the new Jünglings-Verein, arrived in Barmen in search of employment. At Barmen, he became acquainted with a young business man named K. F. Klein, and told him of the efforts Pastor Mallett and others were making in behalf of the young men of Bremen. Herr Klein was a business man of earnest Christian faith, who devoted himself constantly to Christian work. He immediately resolved to attempt a similar organization in Barmen. The beginning of this movement in Barmen-Elberfeld reminds one of a similar endeavor inaugurated but a short time previously among the young men of Glasgow by David Nasmith. On his birthday, Herr Klein invited a number of young

men like-minded with himself to his home, and in this little circle of close friends explained the movement inaugurated in Bremen, and proposed that they undertake a similar work for Barmen young men. The young men received the idea with enthusiasm and determined to establish a Jünglings-Verein. Frederick Klein, who was destined for fifty years to devote himself to the cause of helping young men, was made president of the little Barmen society. His untiring zeal has made this one of the leading associations of Germany. Even in his old age he was accustomed to visit the lodgings of the young working men, and the "Herberge zur Heimat," in order personally to invite the men whom he met to the religious services of the Association. In 1828, two years later, a Jünglings-Verein was established at Elberfeld, now, by the growth of population, practically one city with Barmen. Pastor Döring, a devoted Christian man, had already by faithful preaching and efforts among young men prepared the way for a successful work. A young man named Anton Haason was chosen president. Herr Haason was a man of the same zeal and earnestness as Frederick Klein. Dr. Krummacher says of him: "With his warm heart he encircled young people, and we may well say that a stream of living water has gone forth from him to all young men."<sup>10</sup>

The Associations of these two cities were closely affiliated. Under the leadership of Klein and Haason, they soon became the center of the Jünglings-Verein cause in Germany. Their membership increased rapidly. The best methods of association work were developed here, and Elberfeld and Barmen have ever since been the leaders in forming the constitution and policy of the Jünglings-Verein movement of Germany. Jünglings-Vereine were organized in 1839 in Karlsruhe,

<sup>10</sup> Die Evangelische Jünglings-Vereine, p. 39.

and in 1842, at Ronsdorf. The president of the last named Verein, Pastor Dürselen, was one of the leaders in the early Verein work. He was editor of the first association paper, president of the first provincial organization of Jünglings-Vereine, and was a delegate to the first convention of associations of all lands, in 1855. A number of associations on the Bremen model were now organized in different parts of Germany. By 1844, the year of the founding of the London Association, there were some ten Jünglings-Vereine in Germany, under the leadership of Frederick Klein, Anton Haason, and Pastor Dürselen. Associations now sprang up in widely separated sections of the Fatherland. Reports of the work were published in the organ of the "Innere Mission," at Hamburg, which attracted the attention of many earnest men. The movements of the times and the prevalence of irreligion among the working men demanded new efforts on the part of Christians. Especially was attention directed to the large numbers of unmarried young men of the working classes who traveled about in search of employment. Already the scattered Jünglings-Vereine felt the need of union, and showed a growing sense of the importance of the great mission they had undertaken. In 1847, in the organ of the "Innere Mission," the following open letter appeared addressed to all the Jünglings-Vereine of Germany :

"ANNOUNCEMENT TO THE CHRISTIAN HANDWORKERS' AND  
JÜNGLINGS-VEREINE.

"The Christian Handworkers' and Jünglings-Vereine of Berlin, Gartz, Stettin, and Greifenhagen in Pommern, send greeting to all kindred associations among their German Brethren far and near.

"Although you are mostly unknown to us, it has been for a long time our heartfelt wish to enter into fellowship and loving relationship with you. We have already experienced the joy and blessing which fellowship with a few associations can give, and we are eager for the richer fellowship of a wider circle. It is natural and neces-



sary that every association like ours should reach out its hand to brother societies. *Our chief purpose is to help young men of the industrial classes, especially those who are among strangers and wandering in search of work.* We seek to warn and protect them against the many seductions, temptations and moral pitfalls of life, and to build them up in honor and Christian character. To accomplish this we must be united. Therefore every association which agrees with us in the conviction that faith in Christ is the only foundation of morality and that to turn to Him is their only hope for the future, and for the redemption of these evils of society, is invited to enter into relation with one of the undersigned associations, either by correspondence or by publishing information in this paper (*Die Fliegende Blätter*), or in any other suitable manner. We know already that many of our German Brethren are of one mind with us, and therefore we hope that this call will find a friendly response in many hearts. We are rejoiced to learn that in many foreign cities where Germans are living, Paris, London, and even Constantinople, Vereine exist which are like our own. At home in the German Fatherland, from Basle to Bremen and Hamburg, from the Rhine to Prussian Königsberg, many Vereine with the selfsame purpose exist, but are unacquainted with each other. Let us learn to know each other and draw into a closer union. When this has been accomplished, we can decide how best we may work together. In the meantime, we commend our cause to the gracious almighty protection of God. February, 1847."

This letter was signed by the Jünglings-Vereine of Stettin, Gartz, and Greifenhagen, and also by two associations of similar character in Berlin. The Elberfeld Verein immediately published the following answer:

"Circular letter of the Christian Association of young mechanics and factory workers of Elberfeld to the kindred societies of Berlin, Stettin, Gartz, and Greifenhagen in Pommern:

"We send our heartfelt greetings to our dear Brethren.

"With great joy we have read your letter of greeting, and we cannot conceal how much it has quickened our hearts. \* \* \* \* The need is truly great. Wichern has well said: 'He who lets his son go as an apprentice among strangers, sends him forth into a wilderness in which thousands have wandered from the right course of life. Hundreds of doors which lead to destruction stand open through which young men are drawn.' \* \* \* \* The facts he relates of the life of mechanics is appalling.

"Oh, Brethren! where such a mass of misery and sin abounds, shall we not, with God's help, make an effort to overcome it? \* \* \* \*

We rejoice at the opportunity to share our work with you. Our association is similar to your own. Mechanics and factory employees are united in an association, of which twelve members are chosen by ballot as an executive committee. The officers of this committee are a president, treasurer, and secretary, who have regular meetings to consider the interests of the society. In the association rooms are Bibles, books and writing material; educational classes and lectures are also provided to improve the members. Now that we have come into relation with you, we feel the necessity of naming an individual member to whom traveling workmen on their arrival in our city may apply. Will you please give any workmen among your membership who may be journeying hither, a letter of introduction to Anton Haason, who shall give such an one information, not only concerning our association, but such other knowledge as he may need during his stay in our city. We would also ask that as soon as possible, you act likewise, since the summer months are near at hand, in which the workmen are accustomed to travel.  
\* \* \* \* Dated May, 1847."

In July of the same year, the *Jünglingsbote*, the first paper devoted to the association cause, was established. Pastor Dürselen, of Ronsdorf, became its editor. Then came the Revolution of 1848, which startled all Germany. Whatever we may think of its political character, it certainly aroused the Evangelical believers of Germany to the irreligious condition of the masses of the population. The leaders of the Jünglings-Vereine felt that they must unite if they were to make any progress in winning young men in the face of organizations which had sprung up with the avowed purpose of propagating infidelity. In August, a number of leaders of the Vereine met in Elberfeld to consider plans for a distinct organization. This informal gathering issued a call for a meeting of delegates from Jünglings-Vereine to assemble in Elberfeld in October of 1848. Nine associations from Westphalia sent representatives, who, on the 8th of October, formed the Rhenish Westphalian Alliance of Young Men's Christian Associations, under a district committee, with headquarters at Elberfeld. Pastor Dürselen was made

President, a position he continued to occupy with untiring service for twenty-five years, during which thousands of young men have been blessed by this organization. His address before this conference gives us some idea of the situation which occasioned the movement towards union. He said: "A spirit of wickedness has burst forth among us. The tempest of revolution has torn from our eyes a veil that obscured a dreadful abyss into which we now look with horror. We see with apprehension how the spirit of lawlessness has hurled thousands of our young men into the vortex of ungodliness, lawlessness and immorality, from which the worst is to be feared. We hear how hundreds of societies of young men have been formed, from which come forth the challenge — 'We hate Christianity. God must be discarded, we will never rest until every comrade has personally renounced God.' Therefore we ask ourselves, what can we do in the face of this spectacle? Let us resolutely determine to establish a Christian union of young men, and thus stretch forth a net with which we may rescue many from this whirlpool of destruction."<sup>1</sup>

The yearly festival of Westphalian Churches, held at Elberfeld, became the occasion for the annual meeting of the delegates from the Vereine of West Germany. This gathering at which the Bund Committee was chosen, the work of the year reviewed, and religious services for young men conducted, became a center of great influence in extending the Verein cause. Many pastors who came to the church festival learned of the Verein work.

In 1850, a Jünglings-Verein on the Bremen model was established in Berlin, then a city of 400,000 inhabitants. This was an important advance. In 1853, the West Bund organized its territory into small sub-

<sup>1</sup> Krummacher's "Die Evangelischen Jünglings-Vereine," p. 46.

districts, with from eight to twenty associations in a district. This did much to solidify the movement, and with the annual festival, was really a valuable system of supervision.

By the close of the "formative period" of the Young Men's Christian Association, the cause of the Jünglings-Vereine had made rapid progress in Germany. During the seven years following the organization of the Westfälische Bund, a large number of Vereine were established in West Germany. The methods and purpose of the Jünglings-Vereine of this period may be learned from the report given by Pastor Dürselen, at the Paris Convention. He said: "These associations have combined in themselves several distinct objects. First, they are designed as Christian refuges for young men. Second, they are places of Christian nourishment and religious instruction. Through their Bible exercises and their devotional and other meetings, they aim at supplying the young men with this essential need. Third, they are places for intellectual training. The young men attending them belong principally to the class of artisans and hand laborers. It is an important object of the association to provide those of the members who may need it with that instruction which will fit them for their civil duties. Fourth, they are designed to connect Christianity with social life, recognizing that in every man there exists a social instinct."

"To attain this fourfold end, it is felt by all that the association must be based upon a purely Christian foundation."

"This having been firmly laid, we admit to our society all who will conform to our rules. Conversion is the grand aim, but it is not made the condition of admission. Once a week a Bible class is held in all the associations; this is generally conducted in a conversational manner." "There are special singing classes."

"In each of the associations, one evening is set apart for instruction. Provision is made also for lectures and other means of mental improvement. To maintain the social character of our society, we have promenades, fetes and annual meetings. A very important provision is that of the Christian Herberge, or homes for the traveling apprentices or others. They are furnished with one, two, three, or four beds, according to the size of the place, as well as with food. Instead of being driven to the wretched lodging houses in which many of the traveling apprentices and journeymen are compelled to stay, they can find within the precincts of the association a home, until they may have obtained employment. In all these Christian homes, a mild but strict discipline is enforced." Speaking of the Rhenish Westphalian Union, Dr. Dürselen said: "In the year 1848, the first of the general unions of these different associations was formed. Nine at first joined the Union, now it numbers 130 associations, and includes at least 6,000 young men. If these are not all converted, they are at least under the influence of the Word of God, and are surrounded by the counsels, prayers and exhortations of living Christian brothers."<sup>2</sup>

"At the head of the Union there is a committee. By visitation and correspondence, this central committee maintains a constant connection with all the associations. The committee meets at Elberfeld. Once in the year, at Elberfeld, a general meeting is held of the associations. It is a pleasing sight to see at this meeting seven or eight hundred young men, from all sections, who have come to take part in its hallowed enjoyment. The highest authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, have expressed their sympathy with the work in many ways. In most parishes, the pastors and teachers take an active part in the associations."

<sup>2</sup> Report of Paris Convention, 1855, pp. 54-6.



## SEC. 22.—GENEVA AND PARIS.

Politically and religiously, Geneva has long maintained an independent attitude toward the rest of Europe. Her people are patriotic, and have the self-reliance of leadership. Their estimate of themselves may be seen in the words of their poet philosopher, Amiel, "Geneva is certainly one of those world anvils on which numbers of projects have been hammered out. The explanation is, that Geneva, republican, protestant, democratic, learned and enterprising Geneva, has for centuries depended on herself alone for the solution of her own difficulties. It pleases me that she has not yet become a mere copy of anything. This is a proof of her vitality."<sup>3</sup>

The Christian young men of Geneva, as early as 1836, used to associate together for prayer and various works of charity. For ten years there was such concert of action among a small number. In 1847, a group of young men, after prayer, decided to devote themselves especially to win young people to a religious life. Their work prospered, and they were given a room for their meetings by the Geneva "Evangelical Society."<sup>4</sup>

In this year, they became acquainted with similar attempts at Rheims and Amsterdam, and immediately opened correspondence with the societies in those cities. As knowledge of these societies came to them, they extended their correspondence. They also attempted to hold religious meetings for young people in the neighborhood of Geneva. These unorganized efforts were attended with considerable difficulty, and the movement was, in 1851, in danger of extinction when it was brought into contact with the London work directly, by correspondence, and indirectly, through the

<sup>3</sup> Amiel's Journal, Vol. II., p. 301.

<sup>4</sup> Paris Conference Report, p. 48.



influence of the Young Men's Christian Association of Paris.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. George Williams was now thirty years of age, and had become a partner in the firm of George Hitchcock & Co. His interest in Christian work for young men had increased year by year. In 1850, during a business trip to Paris, he called upon Pasteur J. P. Cook, one of the Protestant ministers of the city, and urged him to do definite work for young men. As a result, Mr. Cook associated himself with some students who were already in the habit of meeting for religious exercises, and soon a band of eighteen young men were united together for mutual spiritual edification. In December, 1851, Mr. Williams again visited them and encouraged them, but reminded them that they were doing nothing for the multitudes of young men who came to Paris and there lost their religious impressions.<sup>6</sup> They ought to be aggressive and organize themselves for the purpose of directing their efforts. Having, however, a dread of organization, they made objections which Mr. Williams succeeded in removing, by relating what the Young Men's Christian Association was doing in London. A committee was formed, which after mature deliberation drew up a plan of organization. This was then submitted for approval to several pastors. The name which they chose for themselves was "Union Chrétienne des Jeunes Gens." At length, on the 19th of March, 1852, twelve young men met together, and having declared their faith, enrolled their names as members of the proposed association. This was the first French Union ever formed. The Geneva young men by correspondence had already become acquainted with the London work, and this organization of an association

<sup>5</sup> Paris Report, p. 49.

<sup>6</sup> Paris Report, p. 39.

at Paris encouraged the young men of Geneva to make a similar effort. After advising with the secretary of the London Association, the young men who had previously been associated together decided to organize. "A provisional committee drew up regulations, chose a suitable location, and on the 1st of December, 1852, the Young Men's Christian Association of Geneva, consisting of 30 members, was founded." Merle D'Aubigne was among those who assisted materially in this movement. The rooms of the new society were open every evening and frequented by between 150 and 200 young men. The number of members soon increased to 80. Every year a general assembly of the members was held. Several members devoted to the work of the Association went out as delegates to visit the south of France, Paris, and Alsace. "During the winter months, a gathering of some sort was held on each evening of the week."<sup>7</sup> For the most part, the meetings were of a religious character. Through the influence of Geneva, the small unions of young men in France and Switzerland, so far as they were large enough, organized themselves into Young Men's Christian Associations. The Geneva Association extended its correspondence to Associations in all parts of the world. In 1853, this work had become so extended that it was carried on largely by means of printed circulars. In August, 1853, the first communication was established between Geneva and the United States.<sup>8</sup> Delegates from other countries visited Geneva, and much was done to promote a friendly intercourse between the Associations of the world.

#### SEC. 23.—SUMMARY.

By 1855, at nearly 200 points on the Continent of Europe, with Elberfeld and Geneva as leaders, there

<sup>7</sup> Paris Report, p. 48.

<sup>8</sup> Langdon's Early Story of the Confederation, page 27.

were small groups of Christian young men, enrolling in all some 7,800 members, organized for the definite purpose of improving themselves and their associates spiritually, intellectually and socially. These groups averaging much smaller in size than the Associations of England or America, they had smaller financial resources and fewer friends of influence and distinction. Their work was more largely among the humbler classes of young working men, and the average membership was younger in age, but they were animated by the same purpose and had perhaps a deeper spirit of devotion, though less evangelistic zeal.

Not only was there a movement among young men on the Continent of Europe, but already the Association idea was rallying young men in all parts of the world. There were now, one society in Algiers, three in Australia, one at Constantinople, and in 1854, a Young Men's Christian Association was organized by students at Beyrout, Syria.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> First American Report, 1854, page 48.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE FORMATION OF THE WORLD'S ALLIANCE.

SEC. 24.—THE PARIS CONVENTION, AUGUST, 1855.

We have seen how the idea of young men associating themselves together for the improvement of all young men, spiritually, mentally, and socially, had gradually taken root in widely separated sections of the world. A common purpose, common difficulties, a common faith, with many societies a common origin, above all a common need of sympathy and mutual support, overcame the barriers of language, nationality, difference of church relationship, and distance, and drew these young men irresistibly together. The idea of a world organization of young men devoted to elevating the young men of the world was hammering out a social force that was to wield a mighty influence, and though the great work of the Association has really been accomplished since 1880, it was during these years of hope, experiment and sacrifice that the foundations were laid. Letters, chance visits, regularly appointed delegates, printed circulars, journals, and conferences, in Germany and America, had aroused a feeling of unity, and had awakened a desire for concerted action. Between the years 1851 and 1855 the London Association had grown in strength, confidence, and prestige. In 1851, just as the work began to assume the proportion of a world-wide endeavor, the noble Earl of Shaftesbury, whose name has been identified with so many social movements for the elevation and ameliorating of the condition of the

oppressed classes in England, accepted the presidency of the London Association, a position he was to hold until his death, in 1885.

The activity of the London Association during the great Industrial Exhibition did much to inform visitors from foreign lands concerning its plans, aims, and work. Messrs. W. Edwyn Shipton, T. H. Tarlton, George Williams and T. H. Gladstone, in various ways, through letters, visits, and addresses, helped to awaken a spirit of fellowship between the widely scattered Associations; but, above all, the location of the London Association in the commercial metropolis of the world enabled it frequently to entertain representatives from Associations of the various countries in which the movement had taken firm root. In this way, the London Society became almost unconsciously the headquarters of this rapidly spreading movement of which Mr. Williams and Mr. Shipton were the natural leaders. Mr. Shipton was a man of broad mind, with a grasp on affairs—an energetic executive, of powerful frame and strong will, with oratorical gifts and intense devotion to the cause of young men. For thirty years he was the faithful secretary of the Central London Association, and one of the most important factors in the world-wide work. He carried on a correspondence with New York, Washington, Boston, and the various Associations in Europe. He prepared in 1855 the first history of the Young Men's Christian Association, which was published in volume 1 of the Exeter Hall Lecture Series.

The Association at Paris, of which Pasteur J. Paul Cook was the leading spirit, gradually extended its influence, and in connection with the society at Nismes, which traced its origin to Geneva, pushed the Association idea among the Protestant communities of France.<sup>10</sup> Correspondence was kept up between

<sup>10</sup> Shipton's *History Exeter Hall Lectures*, vol. I.

these meetings and the Paris Association. In these friendly letters the desire was expressed for a conference, in which leaders in the different Associations of France might meet face to face. The year of the Industrial Exhibition at Paris in 1855 furnished a favorable opportunity for such a gathering. This conference being determined upon, the expectation of visitors from all lands at the exhibition suggested the idea of a world convention of delegates from foreign as well as French Associations.<sup>1</sup> The Evangelical Alliance, which had held its first great gathering with some 800 representatives from all Protestant nations at London during the World's Fair of 1851, had determined to call a similar assembly to meet in Paris from August 23 to August 30, during the Paris Exposition. The committee of the Paris Young Men's Association chose the days August 19th to 24th for the Association conference, in order that where it would be desirable the same person might be a delegate to both gatherings. This was a very fortunate arrangement. Thirty-seven of the delegates to the convention were also delegates to the alliance, and 18 other delegates to the alliance, who were members of Associations, attended sessions of the convention. The program of the conference announced that opportunity would be given to consider a proposition from America concerning a system of international correspondence, and that the conference would be especially devoted to considering reports of the work of the Associations in all lands. The invitation sent out by the Paris society met with a cordial response. It appealed to the growing sense of unity among the scattered organizations of Europe and America, and such countries as were able decided at once to be represented.

The conference assembled in the rooms of the Paris

<sup>1</sup> Young Men's Christian Association Hand Book, New York, 1892, p. 442.



Association on Sunday evening, August 19, 1855. Fifty representatives were present at the first session, which was devoted to prayer and consecration. This number was afterwards increased to 97 representatives of Associations, 35 of whom were regularly accredited delegates to the convention. Associations from 36 European cities of seven different nationalities sent 90 representatives. Seven delegates were present from America, three being from New York, three from Philadelphia, and one from Newark, New Jersey. The conference was not only representative of the chief associations in existence, but the leaders of the work were present to give character to its proceedings and weight to its decisions. George Williams, W. Edwyn Shipton, T. H. Tarlton, and T. H. Gladstone were among the representatives from the London Association. They took an important part in the affairs of the convention; especially Mr. Shipton, who at the critical moments spoke the word and made the suggestion which brought harmonious action.

The leaders of the American delegation were Rev. Abel Stevens, of New York, and George H. Stuart, of Philadelphia. Mr. Stevens was a minister of the Methodist Church, who had been active in laying the foundation of the New York Association, in which he had served as vice-president and chairman of an important committee. Mr. Stuart was president of the Philadelphia Association, and was destined in a few years to gain national distinction in America as president of the United States Christian Commission during the Civil War. The two prominent delegates from Germany were Pastor Dürselen, the president of the Westfälische Union, and K. P. Klein, president of the Jünglings-Verein of Barmen. From Switzerland, the leaders were Max Perrot and Edward Barde, from Geneva, and Pasteur Chas. Cuenod, from Lausanne.

Pasteur J. Paul Cook, of Paris, who had been the chief factor in arranging the conference, was in grateful acknowledgment chosen its president.

Like the American gathering at Buffalo of the year before, this unobserved conference of young men did not attract much comment from the Church or State, but the young men themselves were impressed with the conviction that they were pioneers in a great cause. A spirit of earnestness and hope prevailed in all the session, and though it was the first conference of representatives from widely separated countries, so harmonious were the proceedings that the resolutions of the convention were adopted unanimously. The report says: "The first session, which was to many the first opportunity of meeting face to face brethren whose names and whose deeds have long been familiar, was consecrated to prayer. Friendship was sealed by devotion, and many voices in French and English were raised to the Lord to implore His blessing. A deep feeling of their oneness as Christians, of their common brotherhood as well in faith as in labor, pervaded this gathering from many lands."

Two days were devoted to hearing addresses and reports of the origin and progress of the Young Men's Christian Associations in the various countries represented. These reports give a true picture of the movement in 1855. They show that in Great Britain, especially in London and Glasgow, in the eastern cities of America, in Westphalia and the Rhine provinces of Germany, and in Geneva there was a strongly entrenched Christian sentiment in favor of organized effort to help young men, spiritually, intellectually, and socially. This sentiment had crystallized into organizations of young men, who, standing on an evangelical platform, were endeavoring to discover the best methods for accomplishing their purpose. The movement as

yet was more exclusively religious in its character than in later years, and provided less for other needs of young men. It was, however, less definite in its aim. The two purposes expressed at the convention were: First, the development of Christian activity among the members of the Associations, and, second, the conversion of young men. The development of activity in Christian work among the members had led the Associations in many places to devote their energies to other classes in society instead of concentrating on the "extension of Christ's Kingdom among young men."

The British Associations at this time (1855) possessed the best organization, with the most complete financial resources, the greatest social prestige, and the most marked evangelistic zeal. They gave a large place to the study of the Bible and were the most careful in concentrating their efforts upon young men.

The American Associations, though only four years old, were larger in membership, more aggressive, less spiritual, with a greater variety of activities,—a national organization, a stronger emphasis upon the need of better social surroundings for young men, a greater emphasis upon religious meetings than Bible study, and a disposition to devote their energies to various classes of society.

The Continental Associations were much smaller in size, were not confined to cities, poorer in financial resources, deeper in devotional spirit, more inclined to limit their activities to improving the membership of their societies, given to Bible study and social fellowship. Few of the continental societies provided places of resort for young men not members, but in Germany much attention was devoted to providing lodging houses for young workmen away from home.

The numerical strength of the movement is presented in the Report of the Paris convention, August, 1855.

*Continent of Europe.*

Germany . . . . .	130	Associations . .	6000	Members.
Switzerland . . . . .	54	" . .	700	"
France . . . . .	49	" . .	700	"
Holland . . . . .	10	" . .	400	"
Belgium and Italy . .	3	" . .	60	"
<hr/>				
Total for Continent	246	"	7860	"
British Isles . . . .	47	" . .	8500	"
U. S. and Canada . .	36	" . .	14000	"
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Total in World . .	329	"	30360	"

The average American society enrolled 380 young men, the British 180, and the Continental 40. Continental Europe enrolled about one-fourth of the membership of the Associations in 1855, and has maintained a similar relation to the movement ever since. At the time of the Paris convention there was not a single paid officer on the Continent who devoted his whole time to the work, and probably less than a dozen in England and America.

On Tuesday evening, the third evening of the convention, Pasteur Cuenod, of Lausanne, "proposed the adoption of the system of general correspondence first suggested by Mr. Chauncy Langdon, of Washington, United States."<sup>2</sup> America, which was destined soon by increased membership, wealth, and the large number of its general secretaries, to share with London the leadership in the Association cause, already took an active part in the general movement. As early as February 22d, 1854, Mr. Chauncy Langdon had sketched in outline to the Washington Association "a scheme of international correspondence, in which there should be a center of information for every national group of Associations, each center being in direct correspondence with all others, furnishing them on the one hand information from its own field and dis-

<sup>2</sup> See Paris Report, 1855, p. 18.

tributing in turn, to the Associations of its own national group, the information so received from abroad.”<sup>3</sup> Mr. Langdon wrote to the London and Geneva Associations proposing this plan of correspondence. The Geneva Association endorsed it and in a printed circular suggested it to the Associations in a more enlarged form. Pasteur Cuenod expressed to the convention his approval of this plan of correspondence and moved that the conference recommend it to the Associations. The general idea was warmly advocated by Messrs. Tarlton and Shipton of London, Mr. Stevens of New York, and Dr. Dürselen of Germany. It was unanimously adopted by the committee. W. Edwyn Shipton, to carry out this proposition, proposed the following resolution: “That the conference having resolved upon a system of general correspondence by means of centres in each country, recommend the following cities as centres for their respective countries, subject to confirmation of the Local Associations:

London as centre for England.

Edinburgh centre for Scotland.

Dublin centre for Ireland.

Paris and Nismes for France and Belgium, and St. Gall for Switzerland.

Amsterdam as centre for Holland.

Elberfeld and Stuttgart as centres for Germany.

Washington and New York as centres for United States; and that the British Colonies in America and Australia be corresponded with separately and the Waldensian Valleys, the Associations in the Levant and other outlying places, be corresponded with through Geneva.” Representatives present were appointed from the different nations to see that this resolution was carried out, and W. Edwyn Shipton, of London, was appointed to receive from the various Associations the announcement

<sup>3</sup> Early Story of the Confederation, p. 27.

of their adhesion to this plan, and as soon as their replies were received to inaugurate the correspondence. This practically recognized Mr. Shipton as the leader in the world's work. "By his talents and his force of character he gathered around him a nucleus of friends with whom he was in the habit of taking counsel after the Paris Conference. Chosen from among the most active and well-known workers of various countries, these men, the first representatives of the international idea, formed practically the first International Committee, though without any definite organization."<sup>4</sup>

On Wednesday afternoon, August 22nd, the supreme moment of the conference was reached. The delegates had come from various lands, from various church communions, they spoke different tongues, they had listened to each other's reports, they had decided upon a system of correspondence, but the three days during which they had associated together had revealed to them all that they were one in faith and purpose in a more real sense than they had imagined. At three in the afternoon, Rev. Abel Stevens, of New York, rose to propose an alliance of the Young Men's Christian Associations of the world. He commenced his address by showing the desirability of some bond of union between the different Associations, its influence as a means of imparting mutual strength; its value as the expression of an inestimable truth, the sacred unity of the Church of Christ, and its special importance to America as removing a stumbling block which might otherwise cause division amongst the Associations on that continent. It was in the power of the present conference to accomplish this work, to confer one of the greatest boons on the Associations, to place on a permanent basis the work to which they were committed, and thus to unite in one confederation the various Associations which they

<sup>4</sup> "Fifty Years of Work Among Young Men," page 8.



represented." Mr. Stevens' basis of union contained five articles: First, that the Associations should be managed by members of evangelical churches. Second, that an order of associate members should be admitted when desired, who should not vote or hold office. Third (the article which really prompted Mr. Stevens' resolution), that no difference of opinion on points not comprehended in the immediate aim of the Association should be permitted to interrupt their harmony." (The danger to the American Association through difference of opinion in dealing with slavery is here contemplated.) The fourth article proposed a certificate of membership to be recognized by all Associations, and the fifth, the system of correspondence already adopted. Mr. Stevens' address was listened to with deep interest and attention. As he concluded, M. Frederick Monnier, of Strassburg, a layman, who represented an energetic Association that had a number of University students in its membership, and admitted only avowed Christians, rose to address the Convention. He said (p. 20): "It is a great idea which our brother from America has just placed before us, and we are all deeply moved by its consideration. It is only because we feel deeply that in Christ we are one and from this arises the necessity we all feel to give expression to this intimate union of faith. It is not ours at this moment to organize a union. It already exists. Our question is how to manifest it in visible form. The first article in the proposition from our American brother would not be applicable in Europe, seeing that here we have evangelical churches, the membership of which does not necessarily imply any personal profession. In preference to the basis proposed by Mr. Stevens, I would submit the following, which has been drawn up by me in conjunction with a friend: 'The members of the Conference feeling that they are one in principle and in work, propose to their respective Associations that they

recognize with them the unity thus subsisting between them, and that whilst preserving a complete independence in their particular organizations, they form one united Association on this general principle.'

'The Christian Associations have for their object the union of those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Scriptures, desire to be his disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom amongst young men.' "

Mr. Shipton at once rose to suggest that in place of Mr. Stevens' first article, that this confession of faith proposed by M. Monnier be adopted as "the basis of the Alliance," and that the succeeding propositions be considered separately. Drs. Dürselen and Traube, of Germany, most warmly supported the proposed basis. Mr. Tarlton and Mr. Williams united in approving the basis, because "it gave sole prominence to the one source and characteristic of the Christian life—love to Christ, and placed the Associations on the one only foundation,—Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Mr. Stevens expressed his ready assent to the proposition. He rejoiced to hear the accordance of other voices with his own. He said: "A solemn act is this in which we are engaged, and one of which the after consequences cannot be conceived. The spirit of God is not withdrawn from His Church, nor from the assemblies of His people. We believe we are under His guidance in the work to which we are now called." "Before Mr. Stevens' observations, the meeting, deeply impressed with the importance of the act which was before it, joined in prayer to supplicate the presence of the Most High, and to entreat that He might Himself dictate their procedure." Then the revised proposition was read as the fundamental principle of the Alliance of the Young Men's Christian Associations, the meeting all standing, in

which position it was then solemnly passed by the unanimous vote of the whole assembly. The members present then knelt together, gratefully to acknowledge the mercy of God and to entreat His benediction on the decision at which they had arrived." Thus was adopted the Paris Basis, the "Apostle's Creed" of the Young Men's Christian Association, the one standard expressing simply and clearly the aim and the faith of the movement.

The final form in which the Paris Basis was adopted is as follows :

"ALLIANCE OF YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS.

The delegates of various Young Men's Christian Associations of Europe and America, assembled in conference at Paris the 22d of August, 1855, feeling that they are one in principle and in operation, recommend to their respective societies to recognize with them the unity existing among their Associations, and whilst preserving a complete independence as to their particular organizations and their modes of action, to form a confederation on the following fundamental principle, such principle to be regarded as the basis of admission of other societies in the future.

The Young Men's Christian Associations seek to unite those young men who, regarding Jesus Christ as their God and Saviour according to the Holy Scriptures, desire to be his disciples in their doctrine and in their life, and to associate their efforts for the extension of His Kingdom among young men. This fundamental principle being admitted, the Conference further proposes :

First—That any difference of opinion on other subjects, however important in themselves, but not embraced by the specific designs of the Association, shall not interfere with the harmonious relations of the con-

federated societies. Second—That a traveling certificate of membership be designed, by which members of the confederated societies shall be entitled to the privileges of any other society belonging to this confederation, and to the personal attention of all its members. Third—That the system of correspondence adopted by this Conference shall apply to the societies of this confederation.”<sup>5</sup>

This basis was destined to be adopted by all the Associations of the world as at once the bond of union, the inspiration to endeavor, and the test by which the Association offered itself to the judgment of mankind. The remaining articles proposed by Mr. Stevens were considered and adopted, with the exception of the second. This referred to the admission of associate members, and was left to the discretion of local Associations. We have dwelt thus at length upon the Paris Convention and quoted so freely from the reports and speeches because this Convention marks the close of a complete period of Association history—the launching of the Association idea! The Paris Convention, and especially the Paris Basis, had a remarkable influence in steadying and unifying the Association movement. Methods of accomplishing its great mission were still to be discovered, financial resources and the adherence of influential members were yet to be won, the magnitude of the task before it was hardly grasped, but the mission and bond of faith of the Association had been clearly stated, never to be recalled, and the movement was presented as a definite organization before the world! The following evening, Thursday, August the 23d, by invitation, the Conference visited the Evangelical Alliance, attended by 1,200 delegates from all Protestant lands.<sup>6</sup> Mr. Maximillian Perot, of Geneva, presented

<sup>5</sup> Paris Report, 1855, p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> Second Alliance Report, p. 35.

a paper describing the "Rise, Progress and Operations of Young Men's Christian Associations." Addresses by George H. Stuart, of Philadelphia, and others on the basis of union just adopted were delivered before the Alliance. The Basis, with extracts from Mr. Perot's paper, was published in the Evangelical Alliance Report, and thus a wider publicity was given to the Association.

On Friday afternoon, August 24th, the delegates met in the rooms of the Paris Association for their farewell service. It was an impressive hour. Letters were read inviting the Conference to send delegates both to the American Convention, soon to be held at Cincinnati, and the German Conference, which had been announced for September the 9th at Elberfeld. Parting words were uttered by delegates from each of the countries represented. Mr. T. H. Gladstone reminded the meeting of how different a scene was passing in Paris on that very day nearly three hundred years before, and observed, "that deep emotions of gratitude should accompany the reflection that the 24th of August, 1855, was not marked by a St. Bartholomew's massacre, but was signalized by the binding together of a holy union, and the connecting of a true fellowship of sacred affection between representatives of the Christian young men of France, Switzerland, Germany, Holland, Britain and America."

#### SEC. 25.—CONCLUSION.

The founding of the Young Men's Christian Association was now accomplished. During the eleven years, 1844 to 1855, the spiritual force was generated which during the succeeding decades was to vitally influence the character of multitudes of young men. The rise of the city had brought the young men of the Protestant world under new conditions, with fierce temptations. The

evangelistic zeal of the Protestant Church created a new movement to meet these conditions. In its effort to win young men to a religious life, the Association, was already seeking to provide intellectual and social opportunities. It was soon to set before itself as its aim the salvation and the symmetrical development of the whole man—body, soul and spirit.

The first period may be characterized as the introduction of the Association idea—the extension of Christ's Kingdom among young men by young men! In widely separated sections of the world, among groups of earnest young men this idea had taken a firm hold, and in the succeeding periods was to produce great results.

It had already united together over 30,000 young men, organized in 329 different societies, into a World's Alliance. It had influenced the lives and character of a large number of young men of the commercial class in Great Britain and the United States, and of the working classes of Continental Europe.

It held up a new ideal of union to Protestant denominations; not through creeds, but through service. It was a pioneer in Christian work by laymen and of organized work by young people. Above all this, it was an evangelistic force which aimed at the regeneration of men.

The Association was a new assertion in a practical form of the authority of the Scriptures and the deity of Jesus Christ. In Germany, it was a part of a reaction against Rationalism, and of a movement which was building up voluntary agencies as supplementary to the Established Church.

The Association had introduced a new institution into society; it had rallied a new social force—Christian young men. It had marshalled them into an organization which was now to step forth and take its place among the institutions of society.



## APPENDICES.



## APPENDIX I.

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### CHRONOLOGY OF THE YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION FROM THE BIRTH OF GEORGE WILLIAMS TO THE ADOPTION OF THE PARIS BASIS.

1821. Birth of George Williams, Ashway Farmhouse.
1834. Bremen Jünglings-Verein, founded by Pastor Mallet.
1836. George Williams enters the Holmes Business House at Bridgewater.  
Barmen Jünglings-Verein, founded by K. F. Klein.  
George Williams' conversion.
1837. Prayer meetings inaugurated by Williams in the Holmes House, Bridgewater.
1838. Elberfeld Verein, founded by Anton Haason.
1841. Williams enters the Hitchcock establishment in London.
1842. (London) Prayer meetings established by Williams and others in the Hitchcock establishment.
1844. (London) Prayer meetings established in the Owen House.  
May 31. (London) Meeting to consider organization.  
June 6. *(London) Organization of London Young Men's Christian Association.*  
(Summer) Fortnightly meetings held at Ludgate Hill Coffee House; headquarters established at Radley's Hotel.

1844. November 8. First "Tea Gathering" of the London Association at Radley's Hotel (Black Friars Bridge).
1845. January. (London) T. H. Tarlton appointed missionary to young men.  
Branch Association formed in West End.  
Evangelistic Bible class established for Sunday afternoons.  
February. First public religious service for young men.  
March 6. Second "Tea Gathering" at Radley's Hotel.  
(Summer) Headquarters removed to Sergeant's Inn, No. 14 Fleet Street. Mr. Bevan made President; Mr. Hitchcock chosen Treasurer.  
November 6. First Anniversary gathering held at Radley's Hotel.  
Intellectual agencies established.  
December 6. First popular lecture delivered.
1847. January 1. First New Year's Address issued by London Society.  
July. First Bulletin published by the Westphalian Vereine.
1848. August. First Conference of Verein leaders at Elberfeld.  
October. Westfälischer Jünglingsvereins-Bund formed at Elberfeld.  
(London) Apartments opened in Gresham Street; social agencies established by London Associations, and associates admitted to Association privileges.  
United States—Cincinnati Society of Inquiry formed.
1850. December. E. W. Shipton appointed Secretary by the London Society.

1851. The Earl of Shaftesbury becomes President of the London Association.  
October 30. Van Derlip letter published in Boston.  
December 9. Montreal Society formed.  
December 29. Boston Association formed ; active membership limited to members of Evangelical Churches.
1852. March 19. Paris Association founded by Pasteur Cook.  
May 28. New York Association founded.  
June 29. Washington Association founded.  
October. First proposal of an American Confederation made by Chauncy Langdon.  
December 1. Geneva Association founded.
1853. Sub-district organizations formed in Westphalia.
1854. R. C. McCormick sent by the New York Association as a delegate to Associations in Europe.  
June 7. Buffalo Convention.
1855. January 15. American Confederation completed.  
August 20. Paris Convention convened.  
August 22. Paris Basis adopted.

## APPENDIX II.

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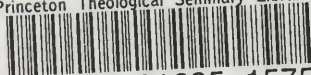
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